



LIFE ALONG THE MIDDLE BROAD RIVER

A HISTORIC COMMUNITY SURVEY
OF THE LAKE RUSSELL WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA
STEPHENS, HABERSHAM₁ AND BANKS COUNTIES, GEORGIA

by
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with contributions by
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And

Happenings

Around Leatherwood Mountain

In the Early 1900's

By Cora Brady Ledbetter

ABSTRACT

This is a summary of cultural heritage resource surveys and oral history interviews collected between 1978 and 1993, and results of the 1991 Passport in Time Historic Community Survey. These investigations recorded over 220 historic sites, including the remains of small farmsteads, light industrial sites, agricultural landscapes, churches, schools, and cemeteries. The buildings were all torn down when the government acquired the properties in the late 1930's. However, surface remains tell us about the settlement of this area and provide information about the people and the economy of the area from the turn of the century to about 1940. Further, as we worked, we learned more through the oral histories of the people who lived here as children, who grew up in the shadow of Currahee Mountain, and along the drainage of the Middle Fork of the Broad River in rural northeast Georgia.

We are proposing a National Register Historic District entitled "The Middle Broad River Archaeological District" (Mid-BRAD). The district includes the cultural sites on approximately 17,000 acres of National Forest lands, located within the present Lake Russell Wildlife Management Area and Lake Russell Recreation Area of the Chattooga Ranger District on the Chattahoochee- Oconee National Forest. Investigation of the many historic sites within the proposed district boundaries is far from complete. However, we are able to present a picture of settlement patterns and life within the Middle Broad River area thanks to all the kind people who helped with their families' histories, and their precious memories.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study of the Lake Russell Historic Community area combined the use of archaeology, genealogy and oral history. We dug in old court house records, searched through family albums, copied inscriptions from barely legible tombstones, and gathered memories from all who could or would recall their youths. It brought many of us face to face with ideas and people we never knew existed and enriched all of our lives in the process. Thanks to the many people who offered their help, we now have a volume we can place in their hands, to pass what we have learned down to their children and their children's children.

The most enjoyable part of finishing a project usually is acknowledging the help of all the folks who made the project possible. This is my pleasant chore as Principal Investigator of the Lake Russell Area Historic Community Survey. As you will see here, this report has been a long time coming, and the project is really not completed yet, if it will ever be. We began the intensive survey of the Lake Russell Wildlife Management Area (WMA) at the insistence of Pearl Wilson and her sister Myrtle Stroud, both members of the Georgia Mountains Archaeological Society (GMAS). GMAS has been working with us in the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) since 1986 to record, protect, and test prehistoric and historic sites on the National Forests here in Georgia. The sisters kept insisting that there were lots of old house places in the WMA and dragged us out to see many of them. Finally, we realized that we had to approach the survey in a more organized manner. In late summer 1991 we set up a special Passport In Time volunteer project to visit and record as many of the sites there as we could. Meanwhile we--and Pearl and Myrtle--were doing initial research on the history of the area and the people who had lived there. It became more and more fascinating as we went along.

That fall we met with Pearl and Myrtle and area natives Mary Lee Steele and Seaborn Farmer. From then on, these folks were with us nearly every time we went to the field for the next six months. One or two days a week, Becky Bruce or I would meet with this crew at one of the house sites to examine, photograph, map, shovel test, and record the features of each one. At each stop, there would be one or more of the former inhabitants of that house (all in their seventies and eighties and still vigorous!) waiting for us at the site. I remember one bright morning there were a dozen people--inhabitants and their descendants--waiting for us to arrive. They often brought photographs, and always memories of the old home places. They were thrilled for us to record the places of their youth, and it warmed our hearts in the process. Pearl did her homework diligently! She has been collecting genealogical data from these families, from the records and the cemeteries for years, and knew them all very well. Even so, occasionally we would cross a spot where Myrtle would call out, "Hey y'all, this place looks 'real housey;' lets check around here!" We would usually find another, previously unsuspected house place, and get it recorded. Before long, someone would match a name to the place.

Without their help, this volume would have been much shorter and a less informative, less interesting story, if it had ever even been suggested. When our planned weeks were up, Pearl, Myrtle, Mary, and Seaborn, often with others of the old communities, continued to search out old house places, churches, schools, voter precincts, and cemeteries all over the area and report them to us. There were over 40 volunteers in the effort, and they donated thousands of hours of their time to help us. With a database of over 200 sites in this area, we have now proposed nominating the Middle Broad River Archaeological District to the National Register of Historic Places. That nomination will rest upon the data presented in this volume and in a technical survey report prepared for management use and for Historic Preservation purposes.

In addition to the “Fab Four,” many others assisted us. District Ranger Tom Hawks provided us with many kinds of support and much data from his own years on the district. Patty Evans-Shumate worked with us under contract and, later for the love of the people and the project, organized and checked much of the data and prepared the draft technical report. Becky Bruce finished up the data checking and prepared the final report. That project is still in the pipeline.

Always in acknowledgments, there are many people without whom the project could not have been done. We will doubtless miss one or two, and to them I heartily apologize. The volunteer participants in our survey deserve profound thanks for helping us preserve the lifeways of these small rural communities in northeast Georgia. Thank you all.

Special thanks go to two other groups. After struggling to get the historical portion of the report into a publishable general form, we were stymied by the lack of allocated funds to publish it. The Fricks Family has subscribed funds to pay for printing, and the Winsness family volunteered to do the computer paste up and formatting, to allow this document to see the light of publication. Thus this is truly a partnership effort, with the majority of that effort and funding coming from our partners, the folks who will benefit most from it. Thank you all again.

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INTRODUCTION

Ayersville? Currahee? Leatherwood? Mountain Grove? Nancytown?
New Switzerland?

These are names that show only on the most detailed local maps--if at all! They are the homes of several generations of Americans who lived, loved, worshiped, married, raised children, played, and went to school, church, and work. Many lived, died, and remain in this isolated corner of northeastern Georgia

This is only a part of their story--much of it remains to be told. This is the summary of a project designed to locate and describe the homes, schools, churches, stores, farms, mills, and stills of six rural communities. This is the story of the Lake Russell Historic Community Survey, conducted by the U.S. Forest Service and an enthusiastic group of former inhabitants and their descendants. This is a history and a cultural record for them and for those who follow us.

For two decades, the United States Forest Service and the Georgia Mountains Archaeological Society have studied the Lake Russell area. These studies include a series of cultural resource surveys, dating from 1978 to 1993, and the Passport in Time Historic Community Survey of 1991-92. These projects have attempted to document, review, and record archaeological remains, historical records, and oral history accounts of several historic communities. In the late 1930s, portions (in some cases all) of Ayersville, Mountain Grove, Currahee, Nancytown, Leatherwood, and New Switzerland communities were displaced by a new wildlife refuge and recreation area. While the lands were appraised for their value, the stories of the people and the settlements they lived in were hardly recorded at all. This account attempts to remedy that oversight.

The present Lake Russell Wildlife Management Area, Lake Russell Recreation Area, and Nancytown Lake Recreation Area are on the Chattooga Ranger District of the Chattahoochee National Forest (Fig. 1). The focus of this account is the Lake Russell Wildlife Management Area (WMA), a 17,000-acre expanse of the National Forest that is managed jointly by the United States Forest Service and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife Resources (Fig. 2).

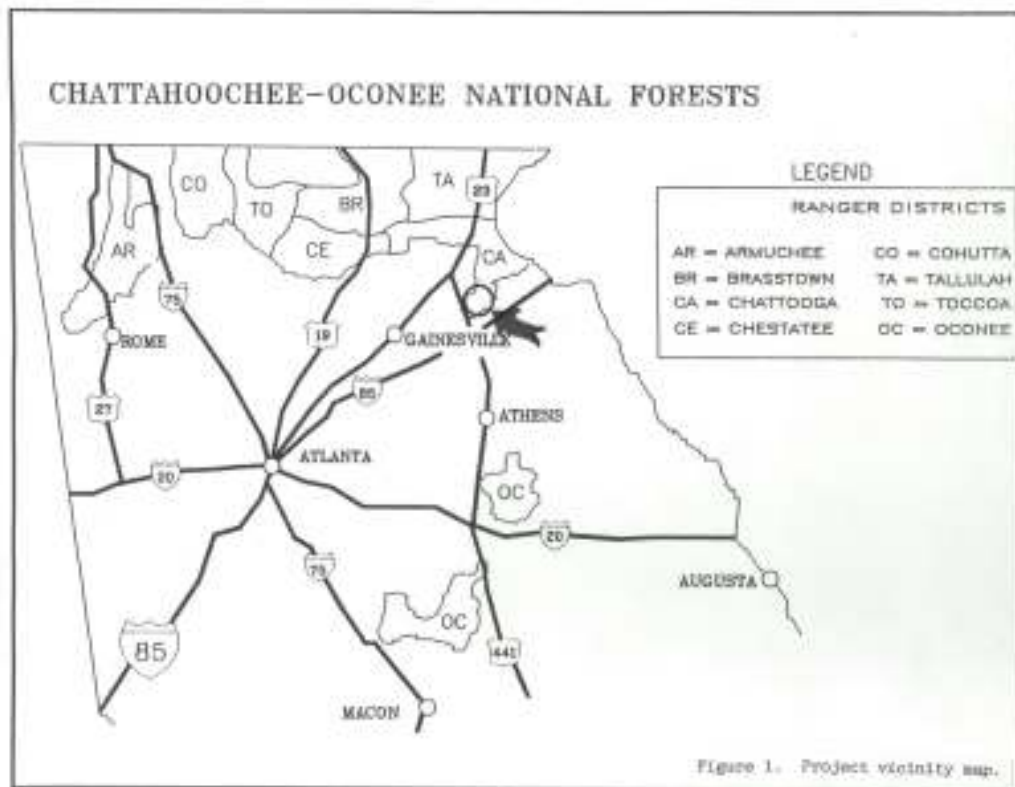


Figure 1

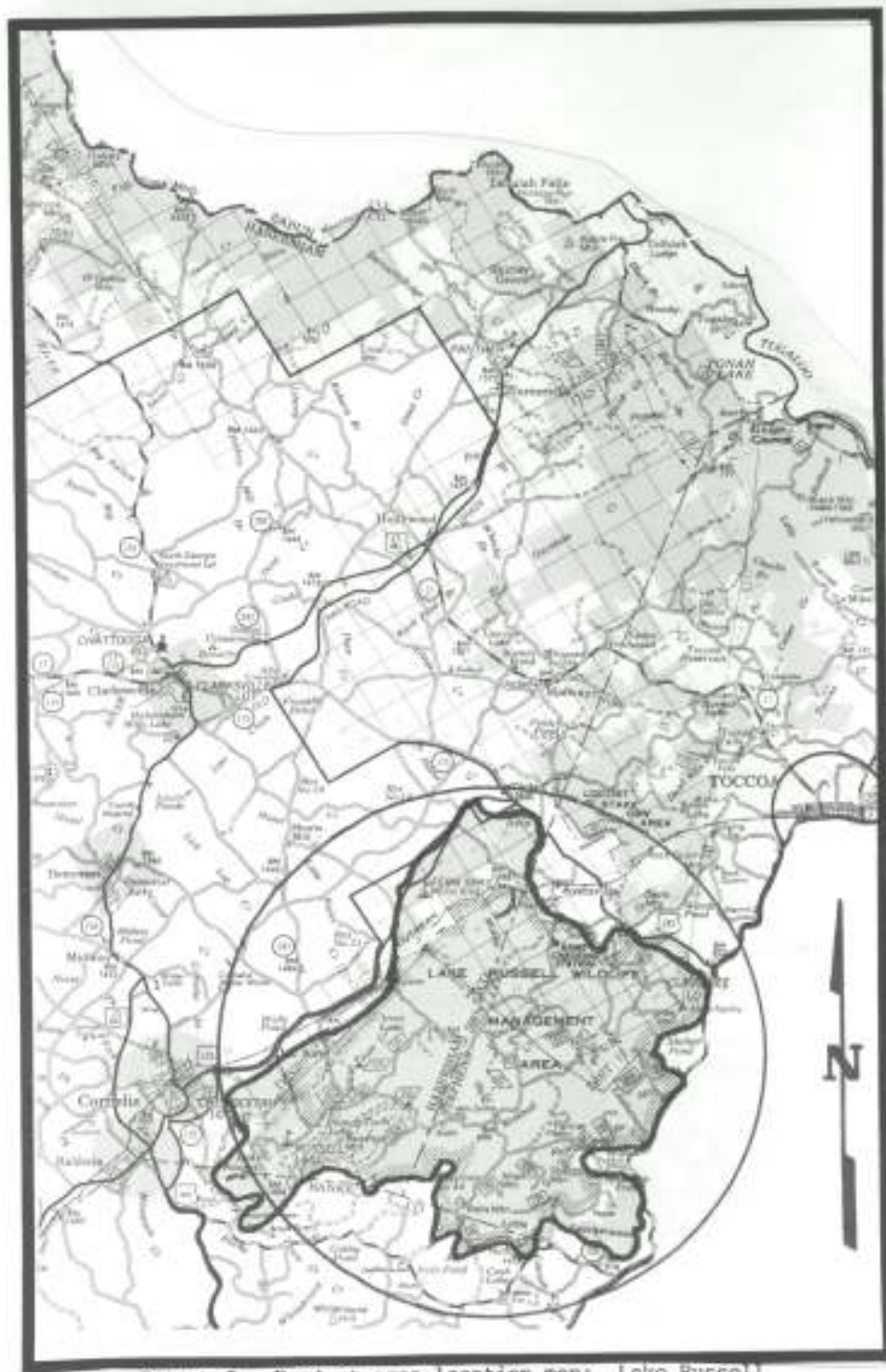


Figure 2. Project area location map: Lake Russell Wildlife Management Area.

Figure 2

In the past, the Forest Service surveyed individual timber stands within the project area for archaeological and historic sites prior to planned timber or recreational projects. Historic house sites were noted and recorded individually, but without a sense of community. As time passed, more and more house sites became known through the formal efforts of the Forest Service and the informal efforts of volunteers Pearl Wilson and Myrtle Stroud. Indeed, the site density revealed concentrations far greater than previously appreciated. Once it became apparent that former communities were located within the Lake Russell area, the Forest Service proposed a Passport in Time project to record them in an organized fashion.

The National Forest Service's Passport in Time (PIT) program was organized by Gordon Peters in 1988. As the Forest Archaeologist on the Superior National Forest in Minnesota, Peters saw the need to involve the public in cultural resources management through volunteer participation in Forest projects including survey, testing, excavation, recording, and analysis of both prehistoric and historic resources located on National Forest lands. PIT grew, and by 1992, volunteers had contributed about 72,000 hours in over 20 states. Georgia National Forests have participated in Passport in Time projects since 1990. In particular, the Lake Russell Historic Community Survey has logged over 1,198 volunteer hours between 1991 and 1993, and more efforts continue, including the preparation and publication of this volume.

In the Lake Russell Historic Community Survey, volunteers and Forest Service archaeologists located and recorded many historic sites within the project area. Through their field work and through oral history interviews with past residents of the Middle Broad River area, a sense of six communities developed. Whereas previous management of the cultural resources within the project area was on an individual site-by-site basis, it is important at this point to recognize the heavy site density within the project area as a collection of interrelated activity areas that offer a sense of historic community.

From 1978 to the present, surveyors have recorded over 220 historic sites in cultural resource inventories. The technical report deals specifically with 130 of those sites. Included are remains of cultural, architectural, or archaeological interest: dwellings and outbuildings, light industrial sites, churches, cemeteries, schools, and agricultural landscape features. While terraced hillsides were not specifically recorded as sites, they were noted in many places. Of the sites recorded in this report, 127 are to be protected from disturbance as contributing parts of the proposed Register District. In addition to these known archaeological sites, informants have identified 27 additional historic sites. These informants lived in the area before the government acquired it in the 1930s. These sites reveal no surface features or surface artifacts; however, subsurface testing is recommended. Systematic shovel testing on these historic sites could determine if subsurface deposits are present.

Many house sites identified within the project area are marked only by portions of stone foundations, chimney rubble piles, cellars, wells, trash scatters, and agricultural landscapes. These sites also had outbuildings (barns, sheds, smoke houses, corn cribs, garages, tenant houses, wells, privies, cellars, trash pits, piles, etc.). Often, one of the outbuildings, usually an older and smaller log structure, had previously functioned as the original residence on the property. Later it might have served as a tenant house or a storage building. The economy of the area is visible in the remains of blacksmith shops, stills, corn and syrup mills, cotton gins, and agricultural landscape features such as stone retaining walls, terraces, stream diversion channels, and stone piles. The survey research revealed six communities, each of which typically centered around a church, school, post office, general store, voting house, or sometimes a combination of these. One of the purposes of this report is to identify these communities by their archaeological remains and to provide the background to nominate the entire project area to the National Register of Historic Places as the "Middle Broad River Archaeological District".

The historic inventory offered a unique opportunity to combine archaeological survey work with the recollections of local informants. Two of these informants, Seaborn Farmer and Mary Lee Steele, both born and raised in the area, contributed excellent accounts of the home places within the project area and provided contacts with a large number of former residents of the six communities. As Mrs. Steele and Mr. Farmer were the main informants for this study, their versions of name spelling and recollections of home places dominate this report. However, considering the many years for which they have been asked to provide details, they both acknowledge that their memory may in some instances have served them wrong. Archaeological and historical research of the Middle Broad River communities is an ongoing project, and this report is a summary of research up to this date. The authors acknowledge and welcome the possibility of corrections and additions.

The project also includes information collected by Pearl Wilson and Myrtle Stroud who, through their personal interest in the North Georgia area, began locating and recording these small farmsteads in 1987. A copy of Mrs. Wilson's field notes from 1987 to the present is on file at the Forest Service Supervisor's Office in Gainesville, Georgia. These notes detail information about the historic sites, oral history interviews, weather, vegetation, and disturbance of sites. Their work inspired this PIT project, and their diligent efforts at field work and oral history interviews form the core of this report.

Prefield Research

Prior to beginning field work on this PIT project, a search of the relevant historic and archeological literature was made to determine if there were known significant sites in the areas to be surveyed. Sources reviewed include the National Forest Land Acquisition records (for previous owners and their activities), previous USFS cultural resource survey reports, the Cultural Resources Overview (Wynn 1982a and drafts of Wynn, Bruce, and Certain 1994), local and county histories, oral history interviews, state site files, National Register listings, and other available professional reports on the general area. In addition, a variety of historic maps and aerial photographs were reviewed for indications of house sites or gross landscape features. Prehistoric occupation in the area was documented in Wynn's Cultural Resources Overview for the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests (1982a), and will not be detailed in this report, which focuses on the historic resources in the project area. Some of the historic sites discussed in this report may include prehistoric components. Several of the sites were recorded in the late 1970s; others were picked up in succeeding surveys for various forest activities. Wynn's Chronological Chart for North Georgia provides a brief outline for the project area.

Wynn's Chronological Chart for North Georgia

DATES	CULTURAL COMPLEXES	CULTURAL COMPLEXES	DIAGNOSTIC REMAINS	CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
1900	HISTORIC		Wire nails, extruded brick, patent medicine bottles	Depression, Recovery, WWII, Indian removal, Civil War
1700 1500	Proto-Historic	Euro-American Mouse Creek Lamar; Coosa and Oconee Provinces	European pottery, beads glass, iron, pipesterns Folded, impressed rim treatments, Upland farmsteads	Cotton agriculture Rapid adaptation of Europeans and natives to European goods
1300	MISSISSIPPIAN	Savannah	Agricultural chiefdoms	Southern Cult
1100		Etowah	Platform mound complexes	Ceremonial centers and Farmer villages
	Trans. Miss'n.	Vining	Simple stamp pots, 2-3 cm points	Corn, beans, squashes
900		Napier-Swift Creek	Carved paddle-stamped pottery	Bow and arrow
	Late			
500			Stone, earthen burial mounds	Flood plain villages
AD	Middle		Hopewell exotic goods	
0 BC	WOODLAND	Cartersville	Linear check - stamped pottery large triangular points	Incipient agriculture with cornamaranth, semi- domesticated
500	Early		Stone mounds	
		Kellog	Cord and fabric marked pottery	Semi-sedentary villages
1000				Intensive pottery mfg.
				Spread of pottery; squashes
2000	Late			
		Stallings island	Soapstone bowls, grinding stones	First pottery on Savannah River.
3000		Savannah River	Savannah River points	Seed, nut, food processing
		Guilford	Grooved axes	River-based camps at ecotones
4000	Middle	Morrow Mountain	Morrow Mountain Points	Atlatl/spear thrower
	ARCHAIC	Stanly		
5000				Riverine intensive collecting
6000				
7000	Early	Kirk Big Sandy	Kirk points Palmer points	Transition from emphasis on hunting to gathering; both remain important
8000		Palmer		
		Dalton	Serrated points	Extinction of giant animals
9000				
	PALEO-INDIAN	Clovis/Cumberland	Fluted points	Nomadic hunting, gathering
10000				
?				Human entry into southeast

Environmental Setting

The surveys took place in a geologically diverse area, where the southern edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains Physiographic Province joins the Southern Piedmont Province. Several geological subdivisions are involved, as a number of parallel zones are bunched together here. The following descriptions are taken from Clark and Zisa (1976).

The Central Uplands District is made up of “low, linear ridges, 396-457 meters above sea level, and separated by broad open valleys. Streams flowing through this section are generally transverse to the structure and occupy valleys 46-61 meters below the ridge” (Clark and Zisa 1976).

The Gainesville Ridges District is made up of similar (though slightly higher, 457-488m) parallel ridges of quartzite and gneiss, with valleys underlain by phyllonite and schist, and relief varying 30-61 m. Chattahoochee River tributaries are controlled by the rectangular drainage of this area. A nearly continuous ridge forms the southern boundary of this district (Clark and Zisa 1976) and, incidentally, of the survey areas.

The Hightower-Jasper Ridges District is represented only in the northwestern portion of the Chattooga Ranger District in western White County. At its northeastern end, the Hightower District is comprised of a series of low, linear, parallel ridges about 457 m high with relief up to about 152 m. The ridges are separated by narrow valleys (Clark and Zisa 1976). The Blue Ridge Mountains District bounds the Hightower Ridges on the north and serves as the edge of the survey area as well.

Nearly all of this area was cut over in the early nineteenth century, and any land that could be was farmed for over 100 years. Eventually, the submarginal land was sold to large timber companies and the government. The forests that stand on it now are maturing (up to 70 years old), mixed stands of pine and hardwood species that have been thinned to varying degrees.

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Early Exploration

Europeans' desire for expansion, combined with improving naval technologies in the late fifteenth century, led to their inevitable contact with the indigenous peoples of North America. Neither group was truly prepared for this encounter; nor could they have grasped the ultimate consequence of such a meeting. As Hudson (1976:97) has said, "Never in the history of the world have cultures so different and so unprepared for each other come into such ineluctable collision." European explorers first contacted the Indian peoples of what would later become the southeastern United States, including Georgia, in the first half of the sixteenth century. As early as 1513 Juan Ponce de Leon attempted a landing on the southeastern coast. Others soon followed, most notably Vasquez de Ayllon in 1521, Giovanni da Verrazzano in 1524 (though his route eventually took him north), and Panfilo de Narvaez and Cabeza de Vaca in 1528 (Hudson 1976:103-107).

Beginning in Florida in 1539, Hernando de Soto led a large expeditionary force of Spanish explorers, adventurers, and fortune seekers through a large part of the Southeast. De Soto and his army were among the first to explore the North American coast and interior. Though the exact route of de Soto's trek continues to be a subject of debate, historians agree that his force traversed a wide arc that began in Florida, and for de Soto at least, ended with his death in what is now the state of Arkansas. Accounts of this expedition provide some of the first glimpses at life and culture for a variety of tribes and Indian nations then existing within the Southeast. In what would later become Georgia, de Soto led his men through the southwestern corner of the state, then northward to the Indian village of Ichisi near present-day Macon. The band then moved farther north to the town of Ocute on the Ocmulgee River, and from there on to Cofitachequi, likely on the South Carolina side of the Savannah River either near Augusta or on the headwaters of the Santee River (Hudson 1976:109-110). At that point they left northeast Georgia, returning some months later from Tennessee into northwest Georgia, and then into Alabama.

Still other Spanish explorers followed in de Soto's footsteps or attempted expeditions in new territories. In 1559, Tristan de Luna tried to push westward along the Gulf Coast towards the mouth of the Mississippi River. He abandoned his mission, though, after reaching only a short distance north into Alabama and east to the aboriginal town of Coosa (Hudson et al. 1989:41). In 1566-1567, Captain Juan Pardo traveled westward with a band of men from the little Spanish outpost of Santa Elena, near present-day Beaufort, South Carolina. Pardo and his men retraced some of the same route that de Soto had followed across the mountains and eventually got as far west as Tennessee. A year earlier, the Spanish had established the first permanent European settlement in North

Americia at St. Augustine in Florida. This jurisdiction eventually included an outpost on what is now the Georgia coast (Hudson 1976:116-117).

Early Settlement

The Spanish established and strengthened Santa Elena and Saint Augustine partly in response to perceived competition and encroachment from the English and the French. Though de Soto had discovered the Mississippi River, it was the French who later thoroughly explored it. In 1682, La Salle arrived at the mouth of the river and claimed for France much of the territory that he had traveled through in his descent. As early as 1565 Sir John Hawkins and his English crew had sailed along coastal Florida and the Carolinas; however, English explorations and colonization were more focused on Virginia and points farther north. By 1700, though, English trade and exploration had pushed as far inland as the Mississippi River (Hudson 1976:118).

Most Georgia history texts begin with Oglethorpe's settlement at Savannah in 1733, but Spanish communities had existed in the future state for over a century before that. In 1526, Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon established San Miguel de Guadalupe, the state's earliest European settlement, near Sapelo Sound. However, San Miguel was short-lived. Spanish Governor Pedro Mendez de Aviles had an outpost of St. Augustine set up on Santa Catarina (St. Catherine's) Island and a garrison on San Pedro Island (Cumberland). First Jesuit, then Franciscan mission leadership was provided at Santa Catarina for the local Guale Indians. During the life of the colony, priests and soldiers made several exploratory trips into the interior to search land and resources--including the inhabitants. At least one or two trips took them into the territory of the Tama Indians, who probably lived near present-day Macon. The colony lasted until 1686, after which the Spanish withdrew south of the St. Mary's River, closer to the fortress at St. Augustine (Wynn et al 1994:D14).

The English settled the Georgia interior soon after 1670, when the Spanish gave up their claim over the region (Coleman 1977). It took considerably more time and negotiation to make binding agreements with native American groups then occupying the same area. In 1730, Sir Alexander Cummings forged an agreement between the Cherokee and the English in which the former tacitly accepted the dominion of the latter. Within two years of this agreement, King George II of England granted an official charter recognizing the colony of Georgia and giving former English debtors a chance at a new life in the New World as settlers of this newly formed colony. In 1733, James Oglethorpe arrived off the Georgia coast at the head of about 120 English colonials (Alter 1971:9). After negotiations with the native Creek Indian population, in which Oglethorpe secured approval for the founding of a colonial town at Yamacraw Bluff, he and his followers began the construction of Savannah, Georgia, above the river of the same name. The new colony attempted to become a beacon for England's disenchanted and

disadvantaged, as well as a buffer between the Spanish to the south and those English colonies established to the north. It was to be an agrarian based economic power, free from slavery, yet providing for the needs of both England and itself through the efforts of white yeoman farmers (Coleman 1977:18-25).

However, in 1740 Georgia became a battlefield when conflict with Spain flared up once again. The war was of short duration, and the Spaniards withdrew for the last time, having failed to dislodge the English. Early settlers of the colony tried to produce silk, olives, and wine, but their efforts were not crowned with success. Later efforts at raising cattle and lumbering proved to be more profitable. The colony was not at all prosperous, though no one starved. Most inhabitants eked out a living in which Indian corn was the staple crop, supplemented by other grains and a great variety of vegetables that thrived in the region. Even so, imports of rice and wheat were often necessary (Coleman 1977).

By the end of Trustee rule in Georgia in 1752, the colony remained largely a coastal settlement with few links to the interior. Though negotiations in 1763 and 1773 secured Britain a much clearer title to the interior lands (Hunt 1973), hostilities between settlers and Indians persisted. It took another treaty with the Creeks in 1796 to permit safely the Anglo-American settlement of the inland area. Another treaty with the Creeks in 1802 placed the state's western boundary along the east bank of the Ocmulgee River (Hunt 1973:48-50). Much of the western half of the state was acquired during the first quarter of the 19th century, with the removal of the Cherokee from the northwestern portion in 1838, marking the end of the last significant occupation of Georgia by Native Americans.

Within the immediate project area of the Lake Russell WMA, the acquisition of Indian lands in what later became Stephens, Banks, and Habersham counties was tied to the important land cessions of 1773, 1783, and 1790 (Fig. 4).

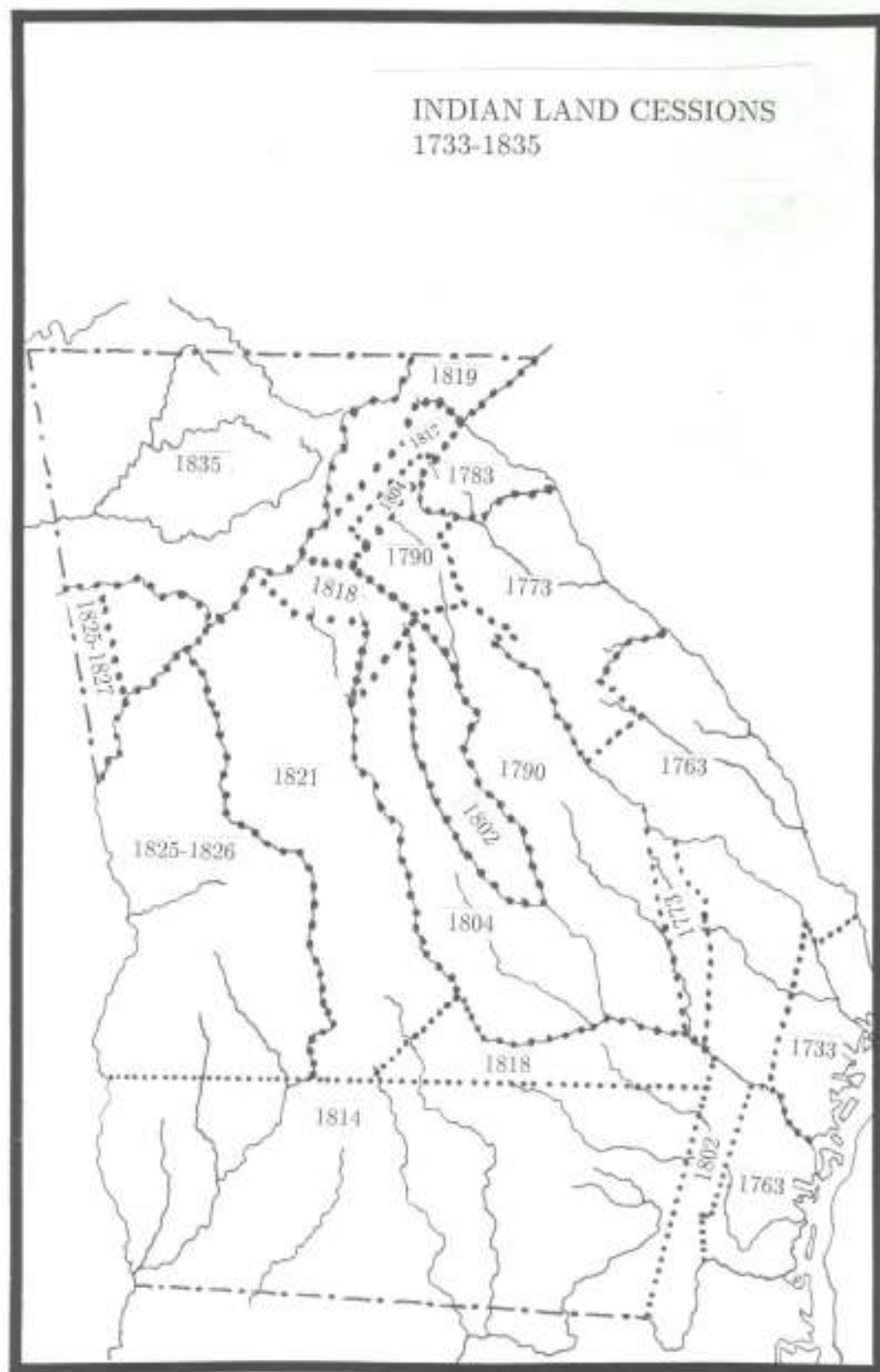


Figure 4. Indian Land Cessions 1733-1835.

Figure 4

Perhaps of greatest significance to the project area was the “New Purchase” of 1773, in which both Creek and Cherokee ceded to the King a considerable portion of northeastern Georgia (Roth and De Vorsey 1981:66). Though perhaps overly optimistic about the potential of these new lands, given later eventualities in 1776, William Bartram described as follows the purchase of the area that now comprises the Lake Russell WMA:

This new ceded country promises plenty and felicity. The lands on the River are generally rich and those of its innumerable branches agreeable and healthy situations, especially for small farms, everywhere little mounts and hills to build on and beneath them rich level land fit for corn and any grain with delightful glittering streams of running water through cain bottoms, proper for meadows, with abundance of water brooks for mills. The hills suit extremely well for vineyards and olives as nature points out by the abundant produce of fruitful grape vine, native mulberry trees of an excellent quality for silk. Any of this land would produce indigo and no country is more proper for the culture of almost all kinds of fruits (Harper 1958:30).

“The Four Mile Purchase,” yet another acquisition of land made in 1804, was of considerable significance to those settlers then living within the general project area, especially those who lived at the Wofford’s Station settlement to the south. Wofford’s Station was one of several early frontier fortifications built along the western boundary of white settlement in northeast Georgia. Like the rest, it served as a military station and a gathering place for outlying settlers in times of danger or local uprising (Trogon 1973:26). Many of the families who later lived in the mountains and valleys of the project area could trace their ancestry to these early Wofford Station settlers or to those living close enough to consider themselves under the umbrella of its protection (Fig. 5).

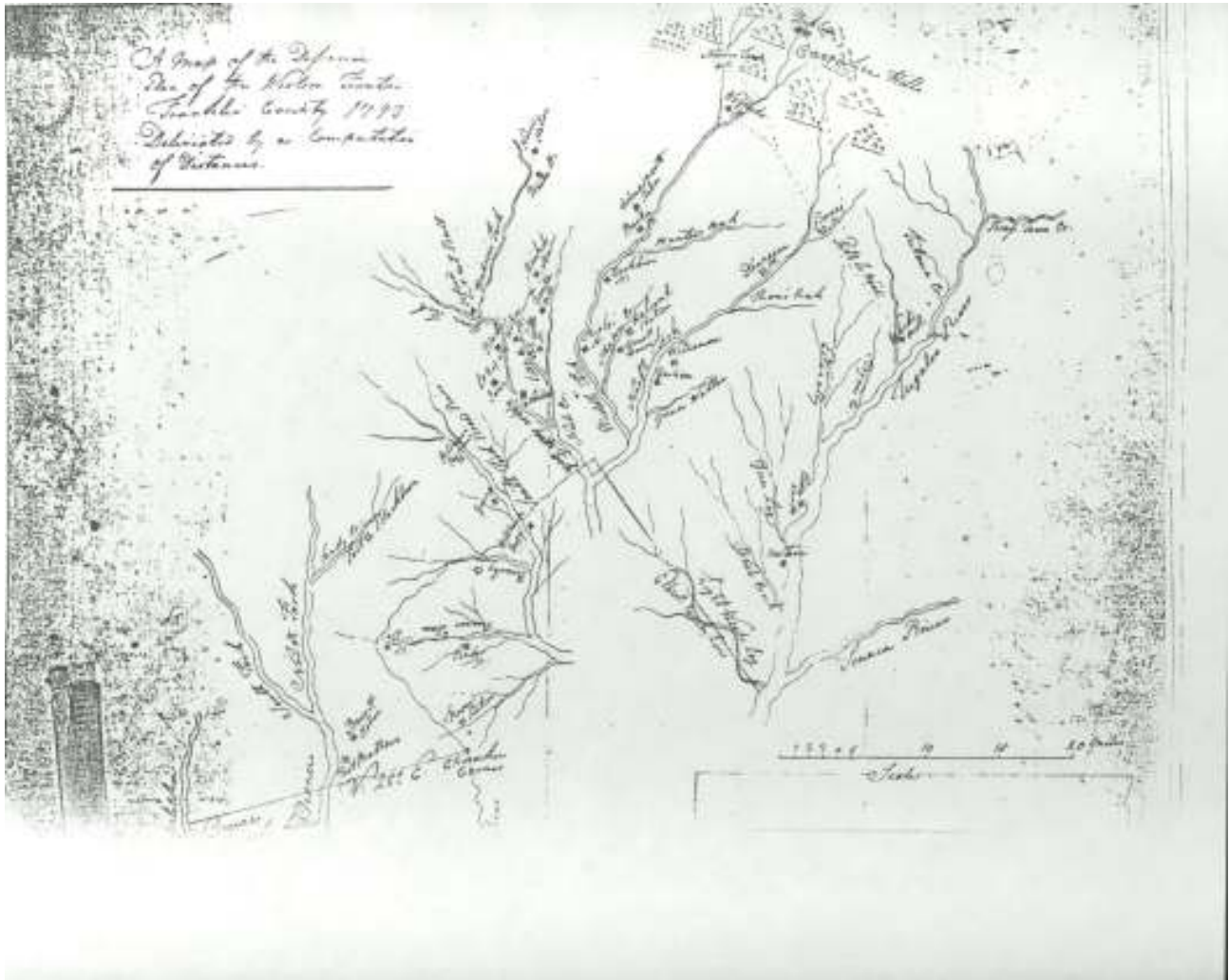


Figure 5

Defensive Plan of the Western Frontier, Franklin County, 1793. Wofford Station, Nancy Town, and the Curahee Hills are within the project area

Wofford's Station was located at the confluence of Nancy Town Creek and the Middle Fork of Broad River. In 1793, Augustus C. G. Elholm, Adjutant General of the State of Georgia, inspected the fort and left the following description:

The 19th [January, 1793] we left Fort Norris and arrived at Wofford's Station in the afternoon. This Station contains four or five Families. It commands four Rifles, 3 Muskats, and two Fusies and situate on the Middle Fork of Broad River near the Currahee Mountain. Lately no Famely have left the Settlement and those who has, is thought to return soon. This Fort lays twelve miles from Fort Norris erected on a Hill but Commands no watter therefor a Well is immediately to be Dishd [probably means "Ditched" or "dug"] (Trogdon 1973:25-27).

The Wofford Station settlement was directly tied to actions leading to the Four Mile Purchase. When Benjamin Hawkins surveyed the new boundary line

between the Cherokee lands and those of white settlers in the northeast, he discovered that the Wofford settlement lay entirely outside of the Georgia State line as it then existed. By 1801, nearly 500 persons lived in the settlement. Each of them could be considered a vocal advocate of any resolution that might include them within State boundaries. Through the Treaty of Tellico in 1804, the Cherokee Nation ceded to the United States Government a narrow strip of land measuring 6.4 kilometers in width by 38.3 km in length (Fig. 6). The people of Wofford Station officially joined the State of Georgia at this time, though Congress held up ratification of the agreement for the next twenty years (Trogdon 1973:27-29). In the interim, another 16.1 km was added to the length of the area. Thus, in its final form, the Four Mile Purchase extended southwestward about 54.4 km from Currahee Mountain in what is presently Stephens County into what is now Hall County (Wynn et al 1994:D15).

White settlement of the larger area of the surrounding New Purchase continued at a rapid pace. It is important, however, to note that this had always been the case. Though Indians ceded the New Purchase to England in 1773, the American War of Independence had a devastating impact on the region. While most major engagements between colonial soldiers and British regulars occurred farther to the southeast along the Savannah River, the war was felt in northeast Georgia in other ways. Tory and colonial properties changed hands repeatedly, and skirmishes with Indian groups became more intense. More important, the pace of settlement in the area by new, white immigrants slowed significantly (Coleman 1977:116).

After the war the upland country resumed its appeal as an area of prime settlement potential on the rapidly shifting Georgia frontier. As revenue generated from the sale of such lands continued to be one of the state's chief sources of income during these years, it is not surprising that the area became the subject of state promotion and the object of repeated speculation (Roth and De Vorsey 1981:74, 83). With great success, the state adopted the headright system of land grants. Using the same system, South Carolina had filled its own upcountry with white settlers. Initially, the state sought to control the renewed influx of immigrants by regulating the size and shape of its land grants. In the end, though, the new immigrants adopted a metes and bounds system of land ownership that provided for a less formal geometry. As Roth and De Vorsey have noted, by the end of the eighteenth century, the settlement pattern in north Georgia could be described more readily as a "patchwork quilt of small, irregularly shaped subsistence farms" than as the uniform, squarely shaped acreage recommended by the federal government (1981:74-75).

For the north Georgia mountains, the vagaries of local topography caused much of the irregularity in farm size and shape. Furthermore, white families usually first settled those areas that were either previously cleared by Indians or recently vacated by them. As Wilms (1973) has documented, Indians and whites both favored bottomlands, while higher slopes and wooded hills were most often retained in common for the free range of domestic animals. Free-ranging

livestock undoubtedly shaped the general appearance of these early farms. In later years it became necessary to build fences, pens, and corrals to contain the livestock within boundaries.

As the pressure of human population grew, farming the mountain slopes and lower hills begin to seem feasible and necessary, though hardly desirable. Setting up farms on such improbable acreage almost certainly meant the introduction of new topographic land forms in the lexicon of Georgia agricultural practice. Such a settlement pattern, however, was not without precedent. As Wynn et al (1994:D17) have noted, the settlement pattern of gap, hollow, cove, ridge, and meadow that Wilhelm (1969; 1978) documented for the Shenandoah mountain/valley region of Virginia may provide an early parallel for a similar pattern in Georgia.

In addition to population pressure and local topography, the particular origin of each individual farm owner also influenced settlement patterns (McHenry 1986). This “subtle interplay between culture and environment” resulted in recognizable patterns in the agricultural landscape (McHenry 1986:108). Thus, the Georgia farm of a Dutch immigrant from New England likely differed noticeably from that of one recently removed from Virginia. The variety of ethnic groups that moved into the area made for a widely divergent pattern of farm practices. German, Scotch-Irish, and English settlers, many of whom were abandoning farms in New England or the Mid-Atlantic, arrived from any number of directions. Roth and De Vorsey (1981:71) suggest that settlers north Georgia primarily followed three routes of migration. The Great Philadelphia Wagon Road brought mostly Germans and Scotch-Irish down the valley between the Appalachians and the Alleghenies, thence into Georgia. The second route began in Charleston and traversed the South Carolina upcountry. The third route began in Savannah and followed the Savannah River through Augusta and into Georgia. Early roads through Hatton’s Ford and through Cleveland’s Ferry entered today’s Lake Russell WMA from the south in Banks County (Roth and De Vorsey 1986:76).

Trogon (1973:32) agrees that the latter route was of considerable importance to the early settlement of what was then Franklin County and later became Stephens County. Also important was the Indian Trail Road, which connected Ruckersville in Elbert County to Carnesville in Franklin County. Most important was the Unicoi Trail. Beginning at the headwaters of the Savannah River (i.e., the Tugaloo) the Unicoi Trail crossed present-day Stephens, Habersham, White, and Towns counties, before entering North Carolina (Trogon 1973:32). Also known as the Unicoi Turnpike or Wachesa Road, this early public highway was built between 1813 and 1816. It passed Clarkesville, the Nacoochee Valley, Unicoi Gap, the Hiawassee River in North Carolina, and eventually turned towards Tennessee (Wynn 1992:D15). The Unicoi Turnpike was a linked farm and market for people, produce, and livestock.

No matter what route immigrants took to Georgia, as often as not their closest neighbors were familiar company. It was not unusual for complex, extended families to travel along Georgia's early trails, and they often settled contiguous tracts of land (Roth and De Vorsey 1981:78). Large clans and family-held farms like these continue to characterize the settlement pattern to this day.

Many first-generation families did not remain in north Georgia for long. As the frontier moved ever farther west, pioneers went with it. Any number of reasons can be cited for this rapid turnover of families, but the lure of greener pastures should not be discounted, no matter how many of these pastures were only fables. Soil erosion and soil exhaustion were also factors. Once cleared of trees, the soil on the rolling hills and sometimes steep slopes of the Georgia Piedmont and mountains washed away rapidly (Roth and De Vorsey 1981:80-81; Wynn et al 1994:D21). Soil exhaustion was the result of unwise farming practices. Once-fertile fields declined rapidly as they were planted again and again in tobacco and cotton, both nitrogen-hungry crops. Few farmers practiced field rotation or the raising of nitrogen-fixing crops. These poor practices were not limited to Georgia, but were instead a continuation of shoddy American farming practices that stretched back to the earliest colonial days. A variety of slash-and-burn agriculture, they were all the more appealing where the frontier and cheap, or free, lands were but a short distance away.

Roth and De Vorsey (1981:80) have suggested that many of these first settlers were not so much farmers as they were herders of livestock, primarily sheep, cattle, and swine. In their opinion, much early movement on the Georgia frontier occurred once an area was settled by so many farmers that the former range of the herdsmen was effectively circumscribed. "Herders made better migrants than farmers" Roth and De Vorsey have said. Whether or not herders pushed out farmers, the population of Georgia still grew at a healthy clip. By 1762, Oglethorpe's original band of 120 settlers had grown to about 11,300 (Roth and De Vorsey 1981:73). By 1790 their numbers reached 82,000; in 1800, 162,000; and in 1820, nearly 340,000 (Coleman 1977:116).

Even by the latter date, the occupation or livelihood of most Georgians was still farming. Though coastal counties had their share of large-scale rice and indigo plantations with their attendant slave populations, most white Georgians remained small landholders who worked as subsistence farmers with the help of few, if any, slaves, just as Oglethorpe and the early Trustees had intended. Indeed, though rice production recovered well in the coastal area following the destruction wrought by the American Revolution, indigo production never again regained its former status, once Britain was lost as an export client. Sugar, another product of the low country region, never achieved any major significance in the state's economy.

In the early years, the small farmers of the Piedmont and mountain regions of the state raised tobacco as their chief cash crop. Wheat, corn, cattle, pigs, and poultry were raised for personal and local use. Tobacco production remained on a small

scale and, eventually, competition from South Carolina tobacco reduced its volume even further. With Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin in 1793 also came the introduction of a new variety of cotton that ultimately proved far superior to the sea island variety produced along the coast (Coleman 1977:111). Unlike sea island cotton, the new short-staple cotton thrived in the upcountry; thus, cotton became "King" across the American South.

In a very short time, the cotton culture brought about a dramatic shift in the agricultural, economic, and political temper of the Georgia Piedmont. Large plantations with many slaves now sprang up where formerly small subsistence farms were owned and operated by a single yeoman farmer and his family. The new upland frontier began more and more to resemble the old low country. By 1820, about 60 percent of all upland farmers devoted at least part, if not most, of their workable acreage to the cotton crop. Where production in 1790 amounted to only 1,000 bales of cotton, by 1820 the number had increased to nearly 90,000 bales (Coleman 1977:112). Cotton was King, but its reign did not extend everywhere. In north Georgia, farmers raised little cotton and, consequently, held few slaves (Wynn et al 1994:D17). Large cotton plantations remained more the exception than the rule, with most producers continuing as small landholders. Nevertheless, with the agricultural coronation of cotton in Georgia and elsewhere in the South, the region set upon a course that would have grave consequences in the future. As cotton production became more and more important to the regional economy, the need for more land upon which to plant it grew apace. By 1838, the push to acquire more Indian lands resulted in the complete removal of the Cherokee from north Georgia. Cotton made the South more dependent on slavery, and it finally took massive war to end the institution.

Early Industry: Manufacturing, Mining, and Merchandising

is, one whose economy, politics, and social life were rooted in the land and in the husbandry of the soil. Indeed, America was then a country extremely rich in land, and Jefferson's idyllic vision of a nation of small farmsteads and one whose production would be based almost entirely on agriculture seemed very possible to many. Manufacturing, or the turning of raw materials into commodities for local and foreign consumption and thus for sale at a profit, was better left to Europe, which did not enjoy the boundless natural resources with which America was copiously endowed.

Prior to the American Revolution, England and Europe had conspired to prohibit the growth of American industries. With the end of that conflict, many Americans were ready to venture into manufacturing, if for no other reason than because it had been denied them earlier. Still, early American manufacturing, particularly in the South, could be described as only a number of cottage industries, at best. Coleman (1977) has suggested that between 1783 and 1820 in Georgia, there were no real factories to speak of and most manufactured goods

were actually handicrafts. Apprentices labored under the direction of master craftsmen in a few shops. On the plantations, slave artisans tried their hands at various crafts, usually under the supervision of white craftsmen. When manufactured goods reached such quantities as to require the skills of merchants, the latter could be found most often in the larger cities, such as Savannah on the coast, and Augusta in the Piedmont (Coleman 1977:112-113).

Not surprisingly, timber products were some of the items manufactured earliest in the region and within the immediate project area. At the same time, the rapidly growing interest in cotton spawned its own industries. Mills of every kind were important to most communities. Where surpluses were generated, they became a locus of trade. Mills for lumber, meal, corn, cotton seed, and oil sprang up along any number of Georgia rivers, streams, and creeks. In about 1790, John Stonecypher built one of northeast Georgia's earliest corn mills on the banks of Eastanollee Creek, in what would later become Stephens County (Trogdon 1973:64). By 1809, in Greene County, industries near Scull Shoals on the Oconee River included a saw mill, grist mill, and cotton gin. By 1811, the state's first paper mill began operation at the same location. A year earlier, investors built the state's first textile mill on the Little River in Morgan County, and by 1830, there was another in Putnam County (Wynn et al 1994:D21).

Another early industry in the north Georgia area was mining, with its related iron works or foundries. Iron mining was the principal activity of the Habersham Mining Company when it incorporated in 1821. Similarly, entrepreneurs established the Habersham Iron Works and Manufacturing Company in 1837. Both companies mined iron in the Demorest area, and the latter shipped its raw material to a foundry at Habersham Mills. Like Habersham County, Bartow, Dade, and Polk counties were also known for their early efforts in this industry. In fact, Jacob Stroup, who built the state's third iron furnace around 1830, erected a similar furnace in the Etowah Valley of northwest Georgia by 1836 (Wynn et al 1994:D19).

Coal was another commodity heavily mined in the mountain regions of north Georgia. Still other minerals and gems sought after during these early 19th century mining operations minimally included quartz, mica, marble, talc, granite, amethyst, and corundum (Wynn et al 1994:D16-19). In Habersham County, limestone was burned into a fine powder to create lime at a kiln site near Antioch Church (Kimzey 1988:12). At a very early date, in Habersham, as in most of the Georgia counties located within the mountain region, gold was one of the most sought-after metals. The gold rush in these mountains officially began in the 1820s, with significant strikes near Dahlonega and on Dukes Creek in Habersham, now White County. Though the county was founded in 1818, by 1830, the gold rush had been a major catalyst in raising the population of Habersham County to nearly 3000 people (Kimzey 1988:12). In addition, gold fever brought nearly forty years of unchecked mining activity, much of it in the form of highly destructive hydraulic mining. Many of those areas hardest hit by

this activity still bear the scars today, especially in White, Habersham, Rabun, Dawson, and Lumpkin counties (Wynn et al 1994:D16).

The railroad was easily as important to Georgia and the South as cotton continued to be. It began to blossom during the first half of the nineteenth century and continued to do so in the second half. In fact, cotton and the railroad were interdependent. Cotton growers depended on the railroad to provide a safe, affordable, and efficient means of shipping huge volumes of cotton, while the railroads welcomed the cotton growers as some of their most dependable customers and as the justification for extending their tracks and their interests in all directions. If eighteenth-century commerce followed the navigable waterways of America, then nineteenth-century commercial and agricultural interests took to the railroad. Settlement patterns, whether on the individual level or on the scale of entire towns and cities, soon were tied to the railroad. Atlanta provides one of the most striking and lasting examples of a major city that grew up where formerly two railroad lines crossed in the wilderness.

In nineteenth-century Georgia, most of these early rail lines were north of the state's fall line in the Piedmont. Most connected Atlanta to points further north and northeast. For example, the Atlanta to Charlotte line was complete by 1856. From Charlotte, the connection to Danville, Virginia, eventually led to Richmond and helped to tie Georgia to the Mid-Atlantic and New England. The Civil War brought the destruction of many miles of track, and the pace of its rebuilding in Reconstruction was pitifully slow. Nevertheless, the progress of the railroad seemed unstoppable during the nineteenth century. In Stephens County, Toccoa became a significant stop by 1873 (Trogon 1973:77), and in neighboring Habersham County, Cornelia was established by 1875. From Gainesville to Anderson, the Airline Railway (now Southern) brought business, industry, trade, and people to the region in general, and to the project area in particular (Kimzey 1988:16). The railroad locomotive became literally the engine of Georgia's economy, so much so that the Georgia rail system could eventually be described as "second only to Virginia in the whole South" (Boney 1977:161).

Neither the expanding rail system nor the growth of industry in Georgia during the nineteenth century occurred at the expense of agriculture. These three components of the Georgia landscape were very much interrelated, and the relationship lasted at least through the first quarter of the twentieth century. In the area of what would, by 1905, become Stephens County, the location of the Toccoa Cotton Mill in Toccoa by 1897 and, shortly thereafter, the Capps Cotton Mill near the same location was no accident, but was tied to the trains that served this town (Trogon 1973:79). Both the trains and the mills, and indeed Toccoa itself, held cotton as their primary interest.

Farm life continued to be the norm for most Georgians of the general project area throughout the nineteenth century and into the first part of the twentieth. In 1850, 8,895 people, including whites, free blacks, and slaves, lived in Habersham

County. Most of those people worked farms. The county could count 732 farms, but only five manufacturing establishments (Kimzey 1988:14).

Soon after 1850, Habersham County splintered in the formation of other counties and, through this process, was significantly diminished in size. One of the new counties was Banks County. An 1860 census in Banks revealed a total of 4,714 people, of whom nearly 1,086 were slaves. Of the remaining 3,628 whites and free blacks, only 385 families were listed as owning land at this time (Mize 1977:119-120). Though only 10 percent of the total, this figure does not suggest that the majority of Banks County residents were city dwellers with or without property of their own. In all likelihood, it indicates the large numbers of individuals in each household. It may also suggest that rented lands, even at this date, were not uncommon.

In any event, the orientation of most Banks and Habersham County residents remained largely rural and agrarian. Even after World War I, the trend remained the same. In Stephens County, which was carved out of Banks and Habersham, nearly 87 percent of its 9,728 people lived on farms (Trogdon 1973:59). By this time, however, many residents were indeed tenant farmers or sharecroppers, scratching out a meager living from small parcels of land owned by others. Tenant farming became widespread after the Civil War with the collapse of plantations and otherwise dispossessed whites and blacks, under new and different labor contracts, as sharecroppers or tenant farmers.

Those craftsmen, businessmen, manufacturers, and industrialists whose numbers in Georgia after the Civil War were still comparatively few, nevertheless continued to grow. Their introduction contributed new and important economic opportunities, as well as practical, cultural, and financial benefits to the communities they joined. In Habersham, as in the other two counties of the project area, mechanics, carpenters, and blacksmiths were commonly found in and around developing communities. Merchants and grocery storekeepers could be found in larger communities, such as Allendale, Gillsville, Berlin, Nails Creek, and Hollingsworth. In the 1860s, Homer could even boast of a printer (Mize 1977:121). During Reconstruction many small farmers turned to the then legitimate business of making corn liquor--"moonshine." For many, the business of turning corn and sugar into hard drink was the only means of outside income. Even after prohibition, its production continued as an important occupation in the project area, well into the twentieth century (Trogdon 1973:59). Other manufacturing and merchandising enterprises of Stephens County during this period included general stores, drug stores, hardware and fertilizer and feed stores, canning, brick making, bottle works, tanning, and furniture making. Examples of some of the earliest of these businesses include the confectionery and soda water stand of J.S. Martin, located at Toccoa Falls and operating after 1878; the drug store of W.H. Davis and J. Davis, open after 1893; the Toccoa Leather Company, operating after 1893; the Toccoa Canning Company, opened the same year; a brick kiln; the first furniture factory in Toccoa opened in 1893 by

J.B. Simmons; a bottle works, open in 1907, that produced containers for the Falls City Manufacturing Company which distributed carbonated drinks; the Dance Guano Company, Inc. operated by C.H. Dance after 1910. Finally, general stores sprang up at many of the major crossroads in Stephens County. The Ayers Store at Ayersville and the Whitehead Store at Dry Pond sold practically everything needed on the rural farmstead (Trogon 1973:64-80).

At the turn of the twentieth century, Habersham County no doubt had many of the same small businesses and industries as its neighbor to the east. However, Kimzey's (1988:19) description of Habersham in 1901 tells us only that there were 74,779 acres under cultivation; six sawmills, five brandy distilleries, a number of cotton mills, flour and grist mills, and a woolen mill. By 1900 Habersham County had 13,504 residents. Banks County had 10,545. (Mize 1977:119).

With its higher prices and increased demand for farm produce, World War I brought a boost to the economy of all three counties. Trogon (1973:60) has suggested that during this time in Stephens County, the number of farms increased and farm life improved measurably, as evidenced by the number of fine homes built throughout the county. However, the prosperity was short-lived. By 1929, depression followed recession and the small farms and businesses of Stephens, Habersham, Banks, and other counties of the north Georgia area were some of the hardest hit. In many place, people drifted back to the farm, as jobs disappeared in town. The federal government initiated a variety of support programs, such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and the Rural Resettlement Administration, to stimulate the economies of many ailing communities and to provide work for those who needed it.

The Depression and World War II brought vast change to north Georgia. While agriculture still provides a stable income and way of life for some residents, most have given up the agrarian lifestyle that for so long typified the existence of a majority of north Georgia inhabitants. In Banks County, for example, cotton cultivation fell from 21,000 acres in the early 1920s with the arrival of the boll weevil, to 8,000 acres in 1946. By 1975, cotton was gone from Banks County. Perhaps for the same reasons the population also dropped. By 1970 Banks County had only 6,833 residents, down from the 10,545 in 1900 (Mize 1977:122-123). Farming also declined dramatically in Stephens County. As Trogon (1973:77) observes, where agriculture once made up 95 percent of Stephens County's economy and industry the other 5 percent, by the 1970s those numbers had been reversed. Today, the timber industry, tourism, poultry farming, and the commute to distant blue collar jobs comprise the economic strategy of many of the current residents of Banks, Habersham, and Stephens counties, while a growing number of retirement communities has brought about a significant rise in the population figures of each.

History of the Lake Russell Wildlife Management Area

In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt approved the creation of what later became the Lake Russell Wildlife Management Area. The plan was to acquire land for what was then known as the Northeast Georgia Game Conservation Project. Plans were drawn up by the Division of Land Utilization. Originally intended to cover 50,000 acres in Habersham, Stephens, Banks, and Franklin Counties, the project fell under the auspices of the Resettlement Administration, whose objective was to move people living on sub-marginal farms to more productive land. In 1935, the Tri-County Advertiser reported that the government was buying land for an average of \$5.70 per acre and that "all of it was offered for sale voluntarily by the owners." Another article reported that 250 families lived in the area to be purchased (Tri-County Advertiser October 24, 1935:1).

"Those who so choose will be resettled with the help of the Resettlement Administration on better farm land as near as practicable to their present homes. Members of any families who remain in the immediate vicinity will be employed in the development of the land use program."

By 1936, there were 986 wage workers, and the project was called the Northeast Georgia Upland Game Project. Dr. W.A. Hartman was the Assistant Regional Director in charge of the Division of Land Utilization. At this time, it was reported that land owners were paid \$6.00 per acre, "thus enabling them to move to better farm land and thereby increase their earning capacity" (Tri-County Advertiser 1935). In developing the area for public purposes, the Division emphasized restoration of game and encouragement of recreation, with reforestation a necessary part of the program. Many of the former land owners stayed in the area and worked on the project. They built fire towers, roads, trails, and recreation areas, worked on wildlife preservation and soil erosion projects, and planted loblolly pine, black walnut, red and white oak, locust, and other trees.

In late 1937, the name of the Resettlement Administration was changed to the Farm Security Administration (FSA). In 1938, the FSA's land in Habersham, Stephens, and Banks counties was added to the Chattahoochee National Forest. Nancytown Lake Recreation Area was completed, and plans for a second lake, to be named after Senator Richard B. Russell, were underway. In 1940 the Forest Service completed Lake Russell, and additional improvements were made in 1952. The main recreation area was built in 1961-62, with alterations to the entrance road in 1979.

The impact of this project and the resulting displacement of families tied to small farmsteads, in some cases for three and four generations, is difficult to surmise. The New Deal embarked on a number of projects similar to Lake Russell

throughout the 1930s. Farm Homestead Projects, such as the project in the Cumberland area of Tennessee, are examples of entire subsistence farm communities created by the Division of Subsistence Homesteads in 1934. These projects were meant to offset the devastating effects of the Great Depression through relief and work. Accounts of the condition of the farm land within the Lake Russell study area recur during interviews with past residents of the Middle Broad River area. In nearly every case, they regret having had to sell their land to the government. Many state that the farm land was still fine. Indeed, the number of cases of condemnation of land by the government seems relatively high for this area. Informants reported threats of condemnation as a reason for eventually selling out, though condemnation to clarify title to the land was a common practice in that period. Thus, sales were voluntary, but not in every case, according informants.

The home and farm sites were intensively picked over before this survey. Upon sale, residents of the Middle Broad River area were allowed to buy their houses back for dismantling. Crops in the fields were often a part of this deal. Forest Service policy in the 1930s was to destroy these house sites, and Federal and State employees were encouraged to remove cut field stones and other remains for their personal use. Eventually, scavenging on these sites became popular to bottle enthusiasts and other collectors.

Also important to the Lake Russell area was the Civilian Conservation Corps, established in 1933 as an Emergency Conservation Work agency. By 1937, the agency was reorganized as the CCC. Its purpose was to provide employment, education, and vocational training to men who could find no other work. Some project-area residents worked with the Corps, which had a camp in Cornelia. Much of the construction that took place in the Wildlife Management Area was the work of the Works Progress Administration and the CCC. By 1942, Congress had voted the CCC out of existence, but during its brief existence the CCC built roads, bridges, check dams, telephone lines, recreation areas, and forest buildings, and planted billions of trees across the nation.

Starting in 1940, the WMA was used as a National Guard Camp called Camp Toombs. During World War II it was renamed Camp Toccoa and became a training ground for hundreds of paratroopers with the 115th Paratrooper Infantry Regiment. Evidence of this activity can be seen in the large ridges and building foundations at the Gun Range in Browns Bottom, at the Currahee Dump, and in large depressions in several places that served as munitions dumps.

An Overview of the Middle Broad River Communities

The early settlement of the project area was the result of the same economic, geographic, and political events described above for north Georgia. Briefly, the Cherokee and Creek Indians occupied the area, and trading from the coastal areas resulted in extended European contact. Immigrants from the north came through Virginia and the Carolinas to begin the first early settlement. Many of these early European farmers settled on lands previously cultivated by the Cherokee. According to land records, land grants from the State of Georgia were recorded at least as early as 1815. However, settlement was well established by the fourth quarter of the eighteenth century as evidenced by the Wofford Settlement and similar forts and stations that appear on several early military maps (Fig. 5). It is clear that the project area contains evidence of earlier settlement. Several of the log structures on the sites evidently date from before 1800. Extensive and systematic testing of these sites could reveal valuable information and help to distinguish earlier housing types from the later twentieth-century houses.

The Farmsteads

Little to no information about the earliest settlers was available through oral history interviews. Many of the informants could not recall their great-grandparents or much about their way of life. However, the informants consistently recalled their grandparents living in the older log cabins, at least early in their lives. These were typically described as one- or two-room cabins with few windows and an end chimney of field stones. The Gibby cabin, which existed before J.M. Farmer built his home in 1906, was a two-room, hall and parlor style cabin with two end chimneys. In many cases, the cabin was left in the yard of the next generation of homes. When there was no longer a family member inhabiting a log structure, it became a home for renters or a place for storage.

Increased economic prosperity and a greater desire for privacy influenced the design of the next generation's houses within the project area. This is seen in the use of milled lumber and a larger number of interior rooms. These houses were typically single-story, wood framed, and set on stone piers. Wood siding and gabled shake roofs predominated. Architectural embellishments were few, but sometimes construction included a false front gable or chamfered posts to support a shed roof. Many of the structures were of a rectangular shape, with four rooms and a central hall on a single story, with a kitchen added to the back to form an L-shaped structure. End or central chimneys made of field stone were typical and, in some cases, brick was used where the chimney extended above the roof line. The four-room plan and its symmetry formed what Glassie (1975) refers to as Folk Georgian architecture.

The history of architecture at the turn of the century supports the notion that structures described by the informants were indeed folk housing. From 1893 to 1914, Charles Sumner Greene and Henry Mather Greene designed one of the first

“blueprint” houses known as the Craftsman. This and similar house styles were popularized through magazines as diverse as *Western Architecture* and *The Lady's Home Journal*, thus familiarizing the nation with the idea of a “blueprint” house. By 1905, Craftsman-style bungalows reached a peak of popularity (McAlester and McAlester 1989:454). However, none of the characteristics of this style can be seen in the photos or descriptions of the houses in the project area. A “local competence” (Glassie 1975) is in evidence here: informants state that these structures were built and designed by their fathers and neighbors or by local carpenters Wade and George Naves. At other times, a traveling carpenter sometimes visited an area, received room and board, and stayed long enough to complete whatever buildings were needed.

Although the dwelling on these small farmsteads was a focal point of the survey, the yard area and outbuildings were also investigated. A picture of the layout of these support structures was gleaned through archaeological remains and oral history accounts. Typically, these were subsistence farmsteads and included such structures as barns, corn cribs, smokehouses, blacksmith shops, syrup mills, whiskey stills, wagon sheds, and animal stalls or feed lots. A kitchen garden was common, as were ornamental plantings and small flower gardens. Yards were swept clean and, in some family photographs, a small berm can be seen to one side of the front yard that may have developed from the sweeping (Fig. 68). Fencing was not as common as it is on modern small farms, but barbed wire and chicken wire can be seen in some photos. Indeed, barbed wire was collected from several sites. The actual layout of these farmsteads deserves more archaeological investigation, oral histories, and study of the photographic record. In the few examples available at this time, it could be surmised that outbuildings were typically found along the roadway or had service roads leading to them. Most often, they were grouped in a linear fashion, aligned with the residence or clustered behind it. The outbuildings seen in informants’ photographs seemed mostly to be in a state of disrepair and had no architectural embellishments.

Farm Economics

Most of these small subsistence farms depended on corn and cotton production. A small plot of cane was also grown. Corn was used for whiskey, grain, and flour, and was milled locally. Cotton was usually grown on about ten acres, picked by the family, and pressed at the local gin, then sold in town. Cane was used for making syrup for home use. Families made, repaired, and sharpened tools in their own blacksmith shop or that of a neighbor. Farm animals included hogs, chickens, milk cows, mules, and horses (see pages 62 and 63). Large livestock operations were not typical for this area, although informants recollect earlier accounts of sheep herding. Many farmers raised bees for honey and grew orchards. Surplus honey, fruits, and vegetables were sold from roadside stands or in general stores. Other services such as blacksmithing, carpentry, doctoring, and burial services were offered around the communities by these small farmers. Informants can remember visits from Doctor Ayers and Doctor Lautheridge, but

for the most part, women tended to the sick with family remedies that often employed indigenous plants. During the flu epidemic of 1918, informants remembered their mothers doctoring their neighbors and their fathers burying the dead.

Light Industry

Light industry was a vibrant part of these communities as evidenced by the many liquor stills, shingle mills, syrup cookers, grist mills, orchard warehouses, and logging sites recorded in the project area. The old mill on Dicks Creek may have been one of the earlier grist mills in the project area. Local informants cannot remember its existence in their lifetimes. Of particular interest is the production of syrup and whiskey. Syrup production began with the cane plot. Mature cane was stripped and topped in the field and bundled and brought to a neighbor who operated a syrup mill and cooker (Fig. 7). Evidence of these syrup cookers can be seen as field stone furnaces and chimneys. One such syrup cooker was at the Joe Farmer Home place. Informant Seaborn Farmer has spoken of the work and has sketched a diagram (Fig. 8) of the evaporator *that* sat on the furnace.



Figure 7. Photograph of a syrup mill, ca. 1930. A mule is providing the power, by turning the cross beam which causes the three rollers in the center of the mill to turn, grinding the cane. Juices from the cane drain into the wooden barrel.

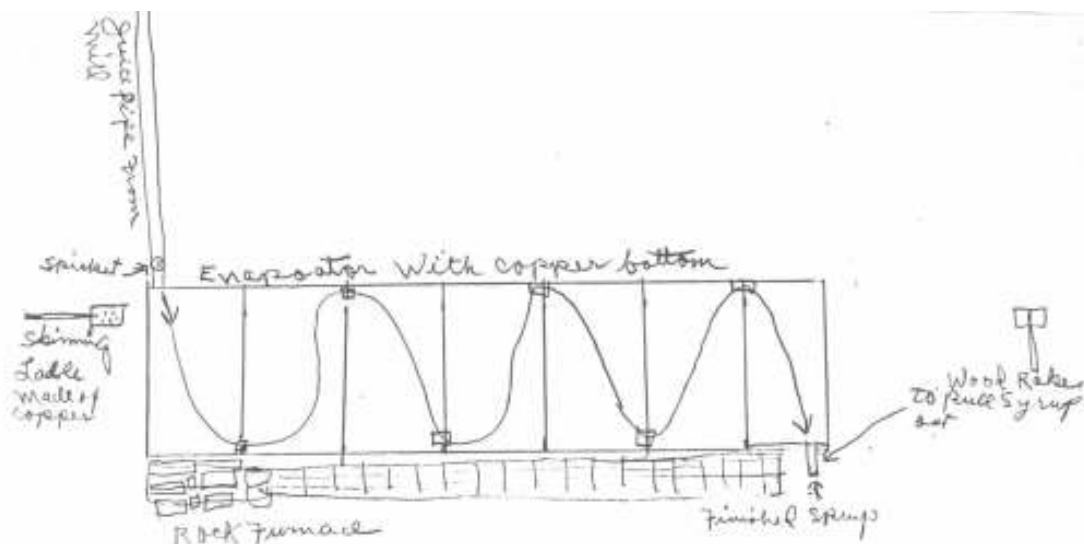


Figure 8. Sketch by Seaborn Farmer showing an evaporator and utensils used in syrup manufacture

Once the cane was hauled to the mill, you'd pile it up and feed it in the mill. This was a mule-powered mill with three big rollers. The cane would be ground and its juice would flow into a big wooden barrel. The person feeding the mill would start about daylight to get a barrel of juice ahead of the other two men who were down by the furnace. One of these men would keep the furnace going and skim the evaporator. Once the first barrel was full of juice, it would be run through a strainer and sent down to another barrel which was at the furnace. A small spigot would regulate the flow of juice into the evaporator. As the juice warmed up in the evaporator, the man would work the juice back and forth with a ladle made of copper. A third man would be at the end of the evaporator, checking the thickness of the syrup and running it out into buckets or earthenware jugs with corn stoppers. The thickness of the syrup could be regulated by the amount of time spent cooking it. It was good syrup and clear. Most everybody would raise about 1/2 acre of cane and that would make 40 or 50 gallons of syrup. People would pay you with syrup -- say you made 50 gallons for them -- they'd give you 20. That way you could sell it in town for about 40 cents a gallon (Seaborn Farmer, 1993).

Another informant has given the following description of whiskey making (Fig. 9 and 10). This industry has a history dating back to the early settlers (see Smith 1993). It played an important role in the economy of these communities, and

informants note that there were times when the only income came from moonshine. When informants spoke of corn as being a cash crop in the area, they meant corn converted to whiskey.

First thing is to look for a site on a stream of good water with a level place to set the furnace and barrels, and plenty of hickory and oak wood and some fat pine knots, and some flat rocks to build a furnace with. Build the furnace around the still with the rocks using red clay to daub the cracks - set the barrels made of wood lower than the slop arm at bottom of the still - have at least fifty barrels. Empty one bushel of cornmeal and water in the still, build fire under the furnace and cook the meal about 20-30 minutes, run it in the barrel from the arm in the wood trough. This is called sweet mash, using 25 barrels. The mash will cool in two or three days, then you cook and fill the other 25 barrels, then break up the first 25 barrels with mash sticks made of wire (Fig. 10). These mash sticks are made of copper wire. Then add water to the mash, top with barley malt. Cover the barrels with tin or roofing to keep rain out, also possums and stray dogs. When it sets about four or five days, it will clear up on top and is ready to run. While you are running it, the second 25 barrels can be broken up. You will also need a swab stick to rub the still on inside to keep beer from sticking. A swab stick is made of tooth brush or black gum tree, beat up like a tooth brush on one end. When the beer starts boiling, swab it down and install a cap on the still. Use red clay and cornmeal mixed to paste the cap on the still. Lay a rock of about 40 pounds on top of the cap to keep it from jumping off. When steam goes through the heater in the box, it heats beer for the next still-full, then steam goes to thump keg to warm in the barrel of cold water. It goes to liquid, by pouring in copper funnel with charcoal wrapped in cloth, then you use a small bottle with cord to drop it in 10-gallon keg. To sample it, as you want 90-100 proof, you go by size of bubbles: larger the bubbles, higher the proof. When it gets too weak, pull fire from the furnace. You empty the still then run warm beer from heater box into the still. You will empty the still from the slop arm into wood trough to barrels. Refill the heater box with cold beer from the barrel. Build up the fire and you are ready to go again, over and over she goes. This is hard work- two men could run the still, but three are much better. A slop stopper is made of a rag fastened to hickory stick so the handle is flexible. You have to put it through the slop arm from inside of the still. Push in to empty still, pull out to stop slop or beer from running out (Anonymous, 1992).



Figure 9. Photograph of a whiskey still, ca. 1930.

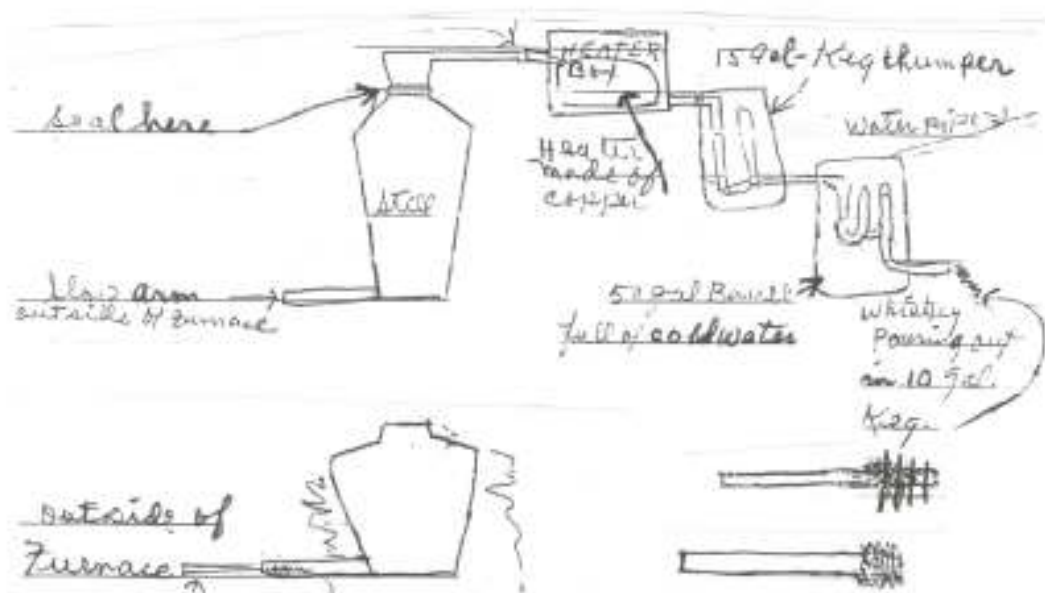


Figure 10. Informant's sketch of a whiskey still and utensils.

Religion and Education

Religion played an important role in the communities of the Currahee area, and many activities centered around the church. Preachers typically went from one church one Sunday to another the next Sunday. Families often followed the preacher to the various churches for Sunday services. There are several cemeteries adjacent to these churches. The Mountain Grove Cemetery and the Burnt Meeting Place Cemetery are two examples of church cemeteries within the project area. Other burial grounds are family grave sites, which may have as few as one or two graves or as many as 30. Many graves are marked with plain field stones or have no marker at all. All but two of the more than fifteen cemeteries located within the project area are owned by the Federal Government. Exceptions are the Mountain Grove Cemetery and the Payne Family Cemetery both of which are located on small private parcels within the National Forest.

At least four school sites are in the project area, including the Ayersville, Cannon, Mountain Grove, and Old Ballew Schools. A 1922 Educational Survey of Stephens County (Duggan and Bolton 1922) described the first three schools listed above. It also noted that “the public school situation is not such as to excite the pride of the citizens or afford a fair opportunity to the children.” The Educational Survey recommended consolidating and abolishing the legal wall of separation between town and local schools. All county schools were at that time one- or two-room school houses with one or two teachers presiding over several grades with minimal equipment. The survey proposed a plan to correct the inequities between the city and county schools. Detailed descriptions of the schools and oral histories from past students are recorded under each school site description. School consolidation took place across Georgia in the late 1950s.

Tenant Farmers

The high number of what *were* earlier known as “renter houses” is proof that tenant farming was frequent within the project area. Informants remembered in detail how tenant farmers shared the work on a farmstead, borrowed off of their expected yields, and moved on frequently. An advertisement in the *Tri-County Advertiser* in October, 1918 read:

Wanted/A good tenant farmer to plant on shares my lands near Clarkesville, must be a man of family. Good houses provided on the property.

Informants recalled that few of the families in the Middle Broad River area were African- American. However, they could remember at least two African-American families living and working tenant farms in the project area. The Joe Perry family house site (GA06-526) is an example of an African-American tenant *house*. *Informants also recalled* African-American farm workers who worked with the landowner and lived in a small room or cabin on

the farmstead. These workers often stayed on the farm without their *families and* then returned to them in town when the work was finished.

Summary

European settlement in the project area began during the Georgia frontier days of the late 18th century. The site of the Wofford Fort and Wofford burials fall just south of the project boundaries, and some families of the group would have settled in our study area. Settlement in the area and the development of subsistence farms continued into the 1930s (Fig. 11). At the time of government acquisition, the 250 families once living in the project area were organized into at least six communities: Mountain Grove, Ayersville, Currahee, Leatherwood, Nancytown, and New Switzerland.



Figure 11

The southern limit of the Mountain Grove community extends to Kelley Mountain and Norton Hill.

The boundaries of the study area truncate the northern portion of the Ayersville community, the western part of the Nancytown and New Switzerland Communities, and the northeastern part of the Currahee community. Falling entirely outside of the project area are the historic communities of Bates Creek and Mt. Airy. The study area boundaries follow the National Forest boundaries and concur with the Lake Russell Wildlife Management Area boundaries as well. This arbitrary limit is dictated by surrounding private properties, and it is acknowledged that communities and archaeological sites extend and exist outside of the study area.

Each of these communities is treated separately and in detail below, with an indication of their locations in Fig. 12.

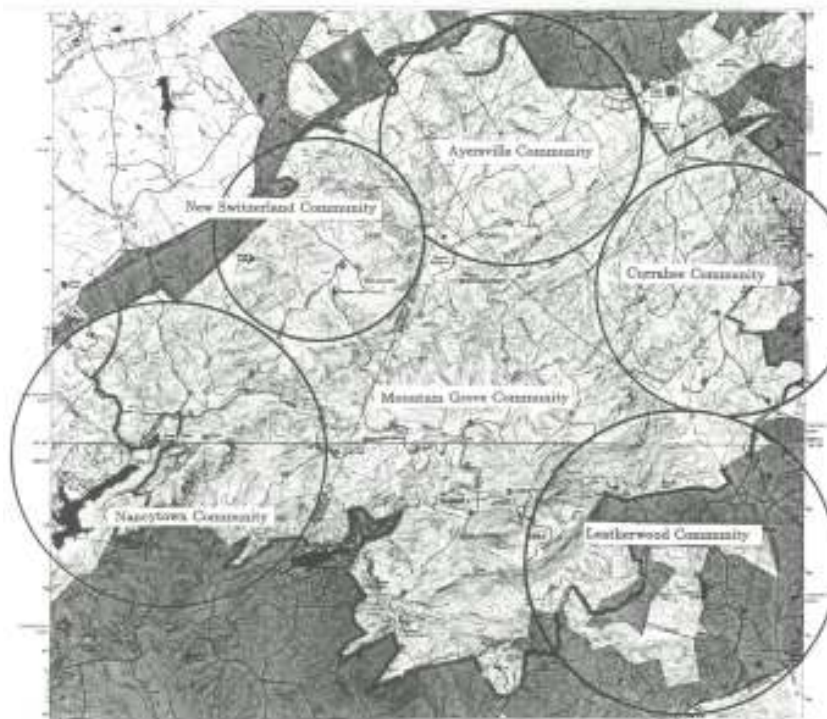


Figure 12. Reductions of the USGS Quadrangle maps for Ayersville and Lake Russell, Georgia. Circles indicate informal community boundaries, except in the case of the Mountain Grove Community which is surrounded by the other five communities. The southern limit of the Mountain Grove community extends to Kelley Mountain and Norton Hill.

THE MIDDLE BROAD RIVER COMMUNITIES

Six communities are represented by a variety of farmstead, renter house, light industrial, church, cemetery, store, school, or farm sites. Informants knew of these communities, although there was no formal designation for most and the boundaries were irregular and probably shifting. We have used our informant's clusterings, sometimes aided by drains or ridges to separate them.

The New Switzerland and Ayersville communities can be found on early USGS quadrangles. The Nancytown community appears on several very early maps and has some Cherokee history associated with its name. Some communities were centered around churches, such as Mountain Grove, and others were centered around a post office or country store, such as Leatherwood or Cannon. The site discussions paint a colorful picture of life in these communities through information about ownership of lands, recollections of local informants, and through the photographs donated by the informants. Two examples of the more detailed background histories are presented below: the Messer Farmer, William P. Brown, and several other households.

Mountain Grove

This community was located in the south central part of the project area and included house sites, light industrial sites, a church and school, agricultural landscapes, and both church and family cemeteries. One of the earliest house sites is the Austin Family house and cemetery. The Wells Mountain area had a large orchard, and the Currahee Voting House was located in this community. At least 30 family homesites were recorded for this community in our survey, but there are a few duplicates, such as where one family lived in several places. Also, sometimes two or three families were recorded as living at one place at different times over the years. Following are the families in Mountain Grove:

Jesse Austin	Andy Stewart	Ayers
Liddy Kelley	John Watkins	Carl Westphal
Arch Brown	Mandy Brown & Robert	Hugh Brown
Bob Gilmore	Judson Simmons	Neal Simmons
J.M. Farmer	Seth Kimbrell	Clark Page
Austin family	Ben Farmer	Rev. B. H. Rich
George Farmer	W.V. Watkins	Ben Fricks
Vardie Watkins	Ed Burgess	Hollis Smith
Liddie Payne	Jim Ferguson	Lawrence Norton
Harrison Simmons	Hugh Brown	A.W. Hendricks
J.P. Thomason	Lafayette Thomason	R.H. "Hub" Kelley
J.J. Kelley	Joe Farmer	Frank Kelley
Milton Gunn	Thomas Kimbrell	Pless kelley

Tom Beck
Darius Echols
Baird Whitfield

Glen Farmer
Joe Tom Pitts
Crawford Farmer

Ausley Shifflet
Charlie Umbehant

Cemeteries in Mountain Grove community included:

Thomason Cemetery
Tom Meeler Grave
Ballew baby Grave
Farmer Cemetery (2)
Stephens Cemetery

Fricks-Reynolds Cemetery
Austin Cemetery
Mountain Grove Cemetery
Kimbrell Cemetery

In addition, there were a number of other activities represented in Mountain Grove, including:

Tom Savage blacksmith shop
Wells packing house
Frank Kelley blacksmith shop
Reynolds' mill
Fricks sawmill
Sassafras mill

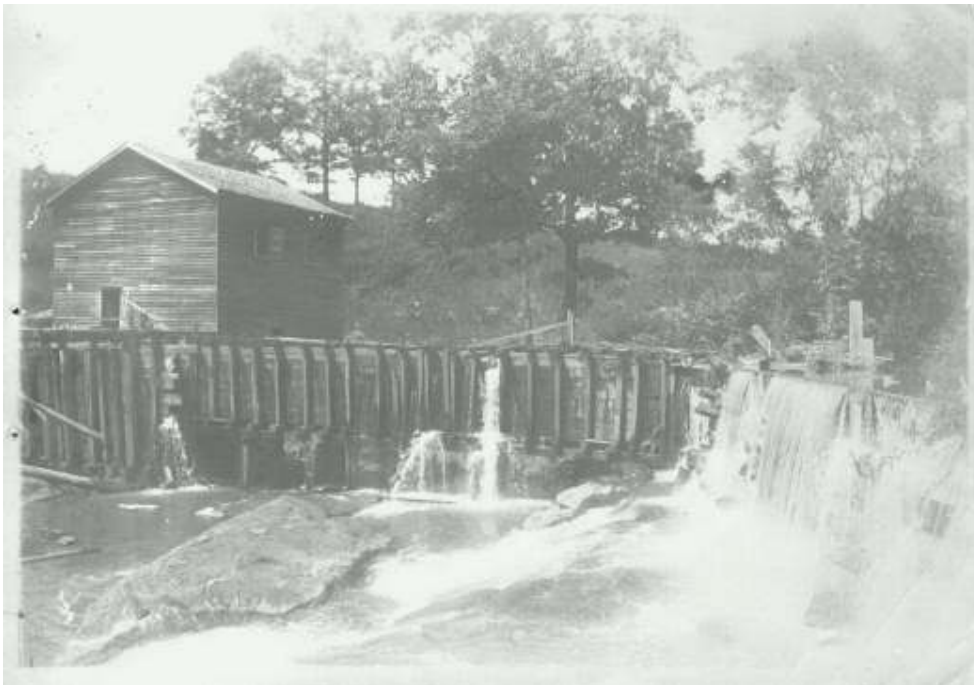
Currahee voting house
Ballew School
Mountain Grove School
Mountain Grove Church
Kelley syrup mill



Mountain Grove School



Figure 67. Old photo of the J.J. Kelley house. Informant Isabelle Kelley Farmer was born in this house (DA06-184). Informants indicated that some years ago, the two end chimney stone piles were removed by heavy equipment, thus deforming the house platform (see site plan, pg. 117).



Unknown but Typical Mill

Seaborn Farmer indicates that this structure was typical of the mills, however positive identification has not been possible.

Sometimes the schools were not all operating simultaneously, so that students would go to whichever school was operating at the time. This might mean a few extra miles walk for the children over the ridge to a school in another community. Often the church served as a school room, if there were no other building available.

Ayersville

This community is located north of the Mountain Grove Community and west of Currahee Mountain. Specific boundaries are not *known*. *We* have divided the territory based mostly on *what local* people told us, and occasionally by ridges or drains. The Brown Bottoms area is included in Ayersville, as well as the old Mount Pleasant Church, a large old mill site, and the Ayersville school. A portion of this community falls outside of the project boundaries, which is the case for all of the communities reported here, except for Mountain Grove. Ayersville was settled by Nathaniel and Jeremiah Ayers around 1810 and was once a stop for the railway. A general merchandise store was located at the foot of Dick's Hill, and the new Mount Pleasant Church served the area for many years. The Brown family was one of the larger landholders in this community.

Not all of Ayersville was within our survey, and for that reason, there are fewer sites recorded here than in Mountain Grove, which is completely within the Refuge. Family homesteads in this part of the community included:

Wm. Preston Brown	Jim Taber
Jim Ayers	Gosnell
Bentley	Steiner
Will Brown	Colston
Dame Dill	Dame Dills
Alvin Pless	Hannah and Gennie Brown
Elizabeth Brown Ayers	Dave Crump
George Naves	George Sellars
Johnson Brown	Hulsey

Cemeteries in the Forest part of Ayersville were

- Brown Baby graves
- David Stone grave
- Bentley Cemetery
- Burnt Meeting Place Cemetery

Other activity areas and structures included:

The Old Mill

Burnt Meeting Place

Still

Ayersville School

Railway line and culvert

While whiskey stills were economically important before, during, and after Prohibition, they are not all shown on these lists. As one of the senior volunteers commented, there's one in just about every hollow in this area.

The report on the Ayersville School - typical of the reviews resulting in the government acquisition of the land creating the wildlife refuge:



AYERSVILLE SCHOOL

Teacher: Miss Elma Weeks.

Location: Six miles to Mountain Grove.

Grounds: Area two acres; titles.....; unimproved; no play appliances; supervised play; no gardens; no toilet.

Building: Value \$800.00; one room; properly lighted; well kept; no cloak rooms; heated by stove; good ventilation; unpainted inside.

Equipment: Double patent desks; no teachers' desks; 20-in. hyloplate blackboard; no charts; no globes; no pictures; no reference dictionary; a covered water cooler.

Organization: One teacher; 5 grades; 42 pupils; no programs posted; no clubs; seven months' school year.

Maintenance: \$516.25 per annum from County and local tax.

Ayersville School

Currahee

This community is located on the eastern edge of the project area, at the foot of Currahee Mountain. Some of the community is outside of the project boundary. Originally a post office was located near the foot of the mountain. The area was settled early by the Landers, Stowe, Lathan, Ryals, Edmonds, Hulsey, and Acree families, among others. There is a large mill site on Hayes Creek, and several family cemeteries are located throughout this farming community.

Family house places found in this part of the Currahee community included:

A.L. Acree	Orin Ryals	W.M. Edmonds
Francis Hulsey	Florence Landers	Wilbur Frady
Taylor	Segars	E.L. Stowe
T.W. Stowe	John Latham, Jr.	John Latham, Sr.
Ed Latham	Joanna Gibson	Cordelia Smith
Kale Smith	Hayes	Brady's
Hulsey	Segg	

The Ferabrew and Latham Cemeteries and Brown Baby graves were recorded in this part of the survey area, and Hayes Mill was noted here as well. The Curraahee Ranger Dwelling and its complex of outbuildings, near the foot of the mountain, has continued to house wildlife rangers of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources since it was built in the late 1930s. These are the only standing structures in the whole Mid-BROAD area, and they date to the period just after government acquisition of the land.

Leatherwood

Leatherwood, which is located around Big and Little Leatherwood Creeks, is in the southeast corner of the project area. About half of this community is private property. The Thomason family farmed and settled this area, and Thomas Thomason ran the post office and general store. His store was in the center of this community, which included the Brady and Payne farmsteads, several cemeteries, and a sawmill. Leatherwood was often considered a part of Currahee.

Family homesteads in this part of Leatherwood included those of:

Thomas Thomason	Ayers	Andrews
Whitfield	Wilbanks	Jim Brady
Thomason	Meme Payne	T.L. Thomason
J.J. Kelley		

Cemeteries in the Leatherwood part of our survey included:

Simmons Cemetery	Payne Cemetery
Unknown Cemetery	Brady Grave
Willis Simmons Cemetery	Susan Mason Cemetery

Besides the Leatherwood Post Office and General Store, the Jim Brady store and a large steam engine (still standing in place), and the Cannon School were located *here*. The school was also used as a *voting house* for elections.

Nancytown

This community is located in the southwestern corner of the project area along Nancytown Creek and Nancytown Lake. There exist several tales about the naming of this town, and it appears as "Nancy Towne" on very early maps of the area. It is believed that this town was named after Nancy Ward, a Cherokee Holy Woman, and eventual wife of Bryant Ward who owned land at Currahee Plantation until 1780. The Stephens family lived in this community, and several renter houses were also here. Other families included Cash, Meyers, Collins, Osborn, and Pitts. Henry Farmer had a small farmstead in the southern section of this community. Portions of the area are not actually included within the Lake Russell WMA, but are considered to be integral parts of the Archaeological District.



Figure 154. Stephens family of the previously recorded Stephens Road house sites.

Stephens family



Travel in the area in 1925. Albert Myers, his wife Leasie, and his sister Celia Myers Hogsed (standing) and their children Margie (being held), Helon, Amos, and Nora Bell. Celia Myers Hogsed was the mother of Pearl Wilson whose research is the cornerstone of this document.

Portions of the area are not actually included within the Lake Russell WMA, but are considered to be integral parts of the Archaeological District.

Family home places in the Nancytown portion of our survey area were:

Henry Farmer	Joe Tom Pitts	Carr
Crow	Collins	Logan Perkins
Floyd Stephens	Bill Osborn	Jim Gables
Lessie Kimbrell	Lizzie Page	Lewis Pitts
Mary Chastain	Unknown family	Bellews
Skid Broome	A.B. Myers	Henry Wagenblass
Joel Cash	John Peyton	Santford Stephens
Cunningham	Jim Wilbanks	Ben Brady
W. Randol Brown		

It is likely that there were additional sites that are now beneath Lake Russell and Nancy town Lake, built in 1937-1940, since they were the lowest and nearest level land around. It is possible that there were public buildings in those areas inaccessible to the survey at the time.

New Switzerland

This historic community is located in the northwestern portion of the project area. The town can be seen on 1885 USGS quadrangle maps. It had a large hotel, a depot, and several stores. J.H. Loudermilk was the postmaster and the proprietor of a general store. The area had a concentration of German immigrants, as well as earlier settlers such as the Cash and Ayers families. Evidence of historic logging occurs in this area, and several light industrial sites, such as stills and a syrup cooker, can also be found here. Extensive rock work along Nancytown Creek was apparently once used for stream diversion. As with the other communities around the edges of the survey area, portions of this old community lie outside our survey, and thus do not figure in the picture we have. Home places recorded on the National Forest included:

Dave Ayers	Jim Tabor
Beck family	Henry Schurter
George Sellers	Joseph B. Cash
Ayers	Tom Nations
Virgil Edwards	Jones
Alexander	Rays
Insley	Umberhand
John Southerland	Insley
Joe Perry	

The Cash Cemetery was the only one recorded in this part of the community. It contains only two graves within a small fenced area above a pond. A baby grave is a short distance from Cash Cemetery.



Figure 15. Seaborn Farmer homesite and daughter. Note the stone steps leading to the porch (previously recorded site GA06-214).



Figure 17. Ben Fricks, Ben Farmer, and Reverend Rich of Mountain Grove.

ORAL HISTORIES FROM THE MIDDLE BROAD RIVER AREA

COLLECTED BY THE HISTORIC COMMUNITY SURVEY

The following are samples from the oral histories and other historical background information that was collected during the 1990-1991 Passport In Time project, and in subsequent research on the area. They give a flavor of the culture of this area in the early part of the twentieth century and life in these rural communities from people who lived in them.

The Messer Farmer Family

The John Messer Farmer Home place was on Roman's Den Road. Today the site is surrounded by a hardwood forest that includes holly, cedar, pine, and vines. There are ornamental plantings of walnut trees, crepe myrtle, fig, chinaberry, narcissus and argeratum still around.



Figure 21. The J.M. Farmer house. Photo of the front of the house.

There is a large stone chimney rubble pile and chimney base, a stone-lined cellar with cement steps leading down into the depression, a large depression from a well, a metal tank with piping (to store carbide for carbide gas lamps), and, on a lower slope beyond the house, a rock-lined privy.

When field crews visited there with Seaborn Farmer, Messer's son, more was revealed about the house and way of life on this small farmstead. Seaborn could remember well the layout of the house and outbuildings (see above sketch). Seaborn spoke of how his father bought the land from Richard Gibby and how there had been an old log house standing on it when they bought it. After Messer built his house in 1912, this log house was used for storage. He could remember Gibby living in the log house. He described Messer's house as an "L" shape with a front and back porch. He spoke of a little room closed in on the front porch, big enough for a bed. Seaborn remembered that the house was built on stone piers, that the chimney was brick where it extended above the roof line, and that they had running water from a ram pump that was placed in the stream (Fig. 21-23). There were two stone and cement flower holders flanking the front steps. Seaborn showed the locations of the barn, outhouse, log house, well, corn crib, and blacksmith shop (Fig. 22). He recalled a renter house behind the Farmer house, the Ausely Shifflet Place, and of a "car house" [garage] located across Roman's Den Road.



Figure 22. Log house and barn (left and right), at the Farmer place.



John Messer Farmer with wife Vira on their front porch

Messer farmed 400 acres. Corn and cotton were the two main crops. They had cows for milk and butter and a hog lot across the road. In an interview in 1966 for a Toccoa newspaper, Messer Farmer talked about farming. He had cows, hogs, horses, mules, and all kinds of fowl. He had some 50 fig trees and sold figs around the community. He had orchards of apples, pears, peaches, and plums. He also grew grapes and scuppernongs. Messer's house had seven rooms. There were also three tenant houses and a smoke house. Seaborn remembered that they did not have modern machinery and had to use cross-cut saws, mules, hoes, and

hand labor to make their farms produce (Fig. 24 and 25). “Everybody down there was poor,” he said, “and had to make a living the best way they could.”

Seaborn remembers the old way of life with pride. Like so many of the families who moved from the WMA in the 1930s, Seaborn and his wife Isabelle Kelley Farmer brought with them plants, rocks, tools, and memories. Seaborn has a collection of churns, tools, utensils, furniture, scissors, an iron, a wooden bread-making bowl, and many other objects from the Messer Farmer home. Messer himself made or repaired many of the tools in his blacksmith shop. Seaborn pointed out a handmade tool used for gathering the honey out of bee hives. His father would use two sticks crossed in a hollow log for the bees to build their honey comb. The handmade tool was a small piece of tin folded into an “L” shape.



Figure 24. Bird band, Henry Thomas.



Figure 25. Will Kelley at the J.M. Farmer barn.

Seaborn recalled the cash crops his father raised. Cotton, corn, and "o-two-pan," or soybeans were the three main crops. Soybeans were raised for hay, and Messer sold the seed or fed it to the hogs. He could get \$8.00 a bushel for o-two-pan seeds. Cotton was a family business, like much of the work on a small farmstead. Children picked the cotton and “poisoned” it as well. They would take syrup, mix it with arsenic, and use a swab--a stick with a shredded rag on the end--to dab the

solution onto the cotton. The poison would kill the boll weevil once it started eating the cotton blooms. Seaborn remembered his father's hired man, Dooley, who wouldn't poison his cotton. The difference was half a bale per acre. Seaborn spoke of planting ten acres in cotton; the yield was usually a bale per acre. He remembered going to Reynolds Mill many times. After that he remembered the electric-powered gin at the old Merrit School place near Toccoa.

One bale is all you could haul [Seaborn said]. They'd gin it and pile the seeds on one side to use in planting next year or for feed for cows. They like cotton seeds, too. We'd get it ginned and back on the wagon. There were two cotton buyers in town at that time: whichever gave a penny more, that's who we'd sell it to. My brother and I would take that check and there's a fella by the name of Sosebee had a cafe and we'd go in there. It'd be about lunch time 'long 'bout then. He was selling the best hot dogs ever sold in town. Six for a quarter. And, of course, a bottle of Coca-Cola was just a nickel a piece. And we'd eat three each and drink a Coca-Cola each and then we'd get back in that wagon and start down the 123 highway. We'd stop there at the country store. We'd get a box of soda crackers for a nickel and a chunk of cheese for a dime and we'd eat cheese and crackers all the way to Currahee Mountain (Seaborn Farmer 1991).

Some families had telephones, Seaborn noted, and he could remember picking up the family's mail from Ayersville. He recalled the first car ride he ever took. He remembers Doctor Monroe Lautheridge from Toccoa bringing his new car. The car broke down and Seaborn and Messer worked on it to get it running again. Before Dr. Lautheridge bought a car, he rode into the community with horse and buggy. Seaborn recalled some of the home remedies his mother, Necy Elvira Thomason, used. He spoke of the times when she would cure children of the "thrash" (thrush, a childhood disease). "Women would bring babies down there and she would carry them down to the edge of the woods and cure them," he said.

Seaborn still has a certificate acknowledging that Messer was on the Board of Education beginning in 1921. This was a grand jury appointment and later became an elected position. Messer never missed a meeting, and Seaborn can remember when Messer quit driving his horse and buggy to those first-Tuesday-of-the-month meetings, and began driving his first car, an Overland. Seaborn could remember a William Dooley and his family, the black tenants on Messer's farm.

Informant Mary Lee Steele remembers seeing a big king snake at her Uncle Messer's mail box and the baby grand piano that Messer bought from the Westphal family. Seaborn spoke extensively about whiskey making in the community. In fact, just about everyone who was interviewed spoke knowledgeably about this important part of their lives. Many whiskey still sites

have been recorded in the WMA, and those that are well preserved will be protected. They represent a technology which was important to this regional economy.

A preliminary review of historic land records, compiled by the USFS for acquisition files, notes that Messer Farmer owned this tract of land at the time the government acquired it, with William Dooley and Felton LaCount as tenants. This property was part of a Land Grant from the State of Georgia to John Watkins in 1823. A plat showing this property notes that at that time it was surrounded on all sides by "vacant land." A plat dated 1894 shows 148 acres of what became the Farmer land in the name of Benjamin Gibby. Messer Farmer bought the land from Richard Gibby and farmed it for 40 years (Fig. 26). He sold the land to the U.S. government in 1938.

James Messer Farmer was the son of William Crawford Farmer (1845-1924), and Elizabeth Reynolds Farmer (1850-1920). His grandparents were James Farmer and Patsy Adcock Farmer. James Farmer originally came from North Carolina and settled about six miles south of Ayersville near the Middle Fork of the Broad River (Trogdon 1973:312).

Messer Farmer was clerk of the Mountain Grove Church for many years.

To the north of the Farmer home is a blacksmith shop. A 5.6 m square stone foundation and a moderately dense artifact accumulation are all that remains. Seaborn still has the blower, tongs and anvil that Messer Farmer used in this shop. The laundry washstand was east of the blacksmith shop.

The Brown families of Browns Bottom

"W. P. Brown Res." is listed on a 1911 utility map of Stephens County (Fig. 11), between the Middle Fork of the Broad River and Dicks Creek. The W. P. Eades place is listed further east, among some tributaries of Dicks Creek. In the USFS acquisition files, both of these names appear as land holders of a large tract, R-3. The history of this tract begins with a Warranty Deed from James R. Southerland to Benjamin P. Brown, dated 1870. The Brown sisters have the original deeds for this sale. Another Warranty Deed was signed from Jane Southerland to Benjamin P. Brown in 1872. Other tracts were conveyed to B. P. Brown from Thomas N. McMullan in 1877, from William J. Rusk in 1879, and from John Watkins, Jr. in 1892. In 1910, B. P. Brown, Sr. conveyed the land to W. P. Brown by Warranty Deed. Will Brown was in possession of the land at the time of government acquisition. Myrtle Stroud researched land deeds for Tract No. 42. She notes that the tract was awarded to David Greer in 1786 and was known as the Greer Tract. She also notes that Robert Brown, a Revolutionary War veteran who settled in Habersham County, had a son, Hugh Brown. Hugh Brown's son, Benjamin Pollard Brown, a Confederate War veteran, bought the Greer Tract.

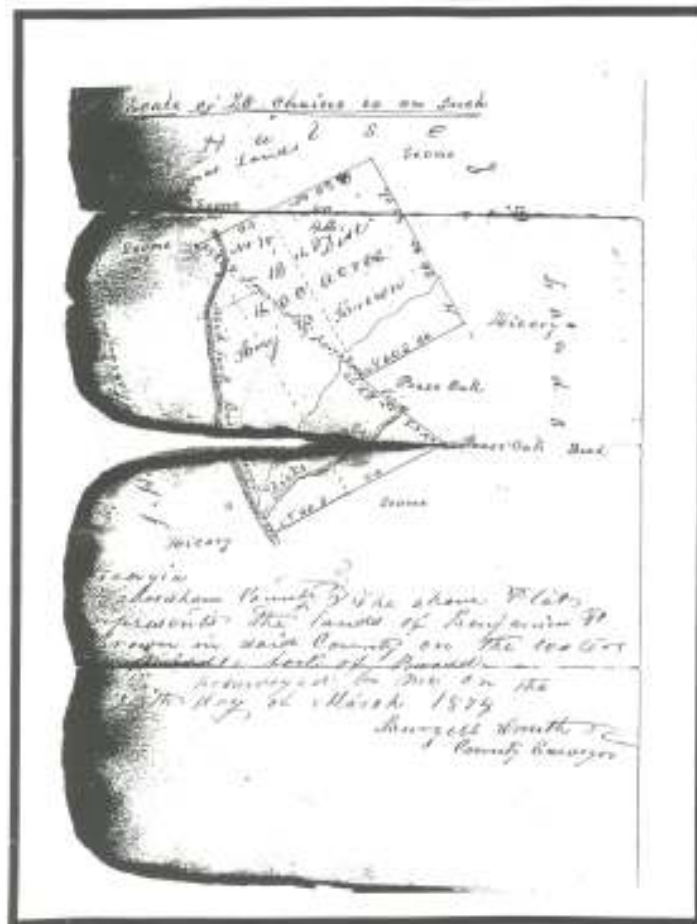


Figure 111. 1874 plat of the B.P. Brown property (6A06-22,209,263).
Note the Four Mile Purchase Line. This property lies east of the
Middle Park of the Wood River and is bounded by Halsey,
Southernland, and Thomas lands.

Some genealogical information will show the interrelated nature of the community, as well as its stability. William Randol Brown was the son of Hugh Brown (born 1871). Hugh Brown was the son of Benjamin Pollard Brown Sr. (1836-1910), a Confederate soldier who moved to Ayersville in 1870. Benjamin's father was another Hugh (1807-1880) who lived in Banks County, and his grandfather was Robert Brown, who was born in 1759 in Virginia and was a Revolutionary War soldier (1973:265).

At one place in the forest, Mrs. Ruth Brown Smith remembered that her father bought 146 acres from Sant Stephens, her husband's grandfather. When she was eleven or twelve, her father and a local carpenter, Joe Tom Pitts, built a new house on this property. The front porch and interior were not finished by the time the government took over the land. She spoke of a barn with a hayloft and four stables and a tool shed that held a mowing machine, a two-horse wagon, a one-horse wagon, plows and turners. She remembered her father's blacksmith shop. He also sold tobacco and candy. Ruth spoke of farming cotton, corn, and tobacco. She spoke of her father's orchards of apples, peaches, plums, pears, cherries, figs, and grapes.

Smith's father went to school in Athens and learned grafting there. He had a small stand near the home place where he sold vegetables to the community. He also kept bees, ground cane for neighbors, and helped to doctor their cows. When they went to Cornelia, she remembered, her father would buy things with the honey or sometimes with money. He also sold honey in the community. Ruth remembered her work with the cane. Ruth remembers she stripped cane for her father. It would run down an evaporator while they cooked it. When the juice came, it was green. They'd store the syrup in cans, buckets or jars. Her father also raised chickens and turkeys, ducks and pigs.

Smith remembered a black man named Monroe who helped her father when he got behind. He came from town and stayed in a one-room house on their land. One cold night, she remembers her father bringing Monroe to their house to sleep. Monroe would tell stories to Ruth's younger brothers and sisters.

Randol Brown worked with copper, making parts for moonshine stills. Ruth had to watch up and down the road for anyone coming when he did his work. Sugar for moonshine was stored under the Mountain Grove Church or in the outhouse. Randol also tanned animal hides. To remove the hair, he soaked a hide in a vat of lye. He then softened the hide by dipping it in another solution. When the hide was finished, he made shoe strings, belts, and other things. Smith's mother sewed shoes for the babies from the softest leather. Smith can also remember her father making chairs, tables and baskets. The bottoms of the chairs and the baskets were made from hickory splits. Smith and her brothers and sisters carried her lunch to school in a basket her father made. The family also raised hogs. When hog killing time came in November, Smith's father cured the hams, shoulders, and side meat. He and her mother canned the spare ribs, backbones, and sausage that

Ruth could remember her mother canning. She spoke of roaming all over Red Root Mountain to pick huckleberries. She remembers her mother canning jelly, jams, pickles, pickled beans, and kraut. They dried apples, beans and peaches. In the winter they lived on the stored foods. She also remembered that her mother made lye soap, made their clothes made quilts and carded the cotton. She crocheted all sorts of lace doilies and table cloths.

[illegible]

63



William Randal Brown's Home - 1940
Ruth, Hermon, Shirley, Lonie, Bruce, Hugh, Mildred, Emma, and Selma Brown..



The people of the area were self-sufficient – William Randol Brown with hogs.



Lonie Brown with her chickens.

Near the Mountain Grove Cemetery, a house platform with a rock foundation and cellar depression are evident at the Rev. Rich house site. Southwest of the foundation is a carbide tank. Seaborn Farmer notes that many of the old houses in the communities had carbide lights. Water and carbide would be combined in tanks underground, creating carbide gas. Typically, 100 pounds of carbide crystals would go into a tank to provide light for several months. This gas was piped into the house through $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch steel pipes and, with the aid of a flint lighter at a burner with small holes, a constant light would blaze. Knobs on the burner would control the intensity of the light. Gas outlets for lamps were provided in most rooms of the house, and there were two gas lamps on the front porch of this house.

Rev. Benjamin Harrison Rich was a prominent local figure in the Mountain Grove Community, serving as preacher and teacher at the Mountain Grove Church and school. The homeplace appears on a 1911 Stephens County utility map.



Figure 36. Seaborn Farmer and Ernest Simmons discuss the 2.1 meter deep carbide gas tank found in the back yard of the Reverend Rich house (GA06-147/318).

In June, 1993, Gertrude Brown drew a diagram of the Will Brown house and wrote this about their farm in the Browns Bottom area:

"We had a large barn with five stables for mules and horses. A loft for feeds for animals and 2 cribs to store corn with shelters to house a wagon and buggy along with tools. A large pasture for cows. Ma churned every day for buttermilk and butter. The milk was kept in a spring to keep cool in the summer."

The Gosnell family lived on land that Will Brown owned across the river and farmed it on shares. They worked the fields with seed and tools provided by Will, and they paid him back when the harvest came in. Gertrude wrote this about the share croppers:

“We had two houses on our farm which we rented to share croppers. They would buy food through winter months and when they sold their cotton they would settle up for the food. The families had children. We played with each other. We treated each other with respect and love. When they got sick, *Mother* and I would take food and help them any way we could. During the flu epidemic (1918), *Mother* tied asafetida in a small cloth, then tied it around our neck and off we’d go. The river was frozen except a small width in the middle of the river. We’d scrape ice off the foot log to cross. Four died in the one house. They were hand carried up the mountain and buried at Welcome Home Church in Habersham County.”

Gertrude Brown had other memories, as well:

"Susie Simmons had four boys and twin girls. She lived in an old house near Uncle Messer Farmer's house. They didn't have much to eat and sometimes nothing. The kids would walk to our house (about three miles), and want to work for a meal for bread or any thing they could eat. Pa would always find something for them to do. There was no Medicaid or government help, but they survived by working. They later moved to Habersham County and some of the children still live there."

Margie Brown remembered the black man Lidge, his wife May, and their baby named Cooney. She remembered other share croppers, too: Alex Holbrook and his family; Monrow Moore, his wife Teenk, and their baby Charlie; the Crump family; and John Simmons and his wife.

Mary Lee Steele is a niece of the Brown sisters. Amy Brown Ayers, Steele's mother, lived in the valley. Steele remembers the tobacco, corn, cotton, and sweet potatoes that her Grandpa Will Brown raised on his farm. Grandpa Brown irrigated his garden with water diverted from a waterfall in one of the creeks. Grandma Brown was a mid-wife for the community. Mary Farmer Brown and Zelia Mae Farmer Anderson had these home remedies:

Balm of Gilead poplar: made a salve with the buds to go on sores and abrasions

Mullein: used leaves to make a poultice for sore throats and chests

yellow root: for sore mouth, kidney trouble

Spikenard (spignet): in whiskey for all ailments camphor: rub it on where pain is

Whiskey and yellow root: for back troubles, "bitters"

Rattle weed from woods: parch it, beat it up, put it in cow feed senna tea: to work you out

Sulfur and syrup: to purify the blood

Make a poultice of fat back meat for boils

Make a poultice of peach tree leaves and put it on the chest for pneumonia

Mary Steele spoke of the role the women played in the community. For the most part, these women stayed at home on their small farmsteads. They tended to the children, the cooking, and all of the daily chores of running the house. They tended the fields and the small animals, too. When they went to church, in some cases the women sat in pews on one side, the men on another. Voting was not common among women, and they were expected to be quiet. While the men also tended fields, took care of the animals, and made whiskey, the women were the mainstay of the family and farm.

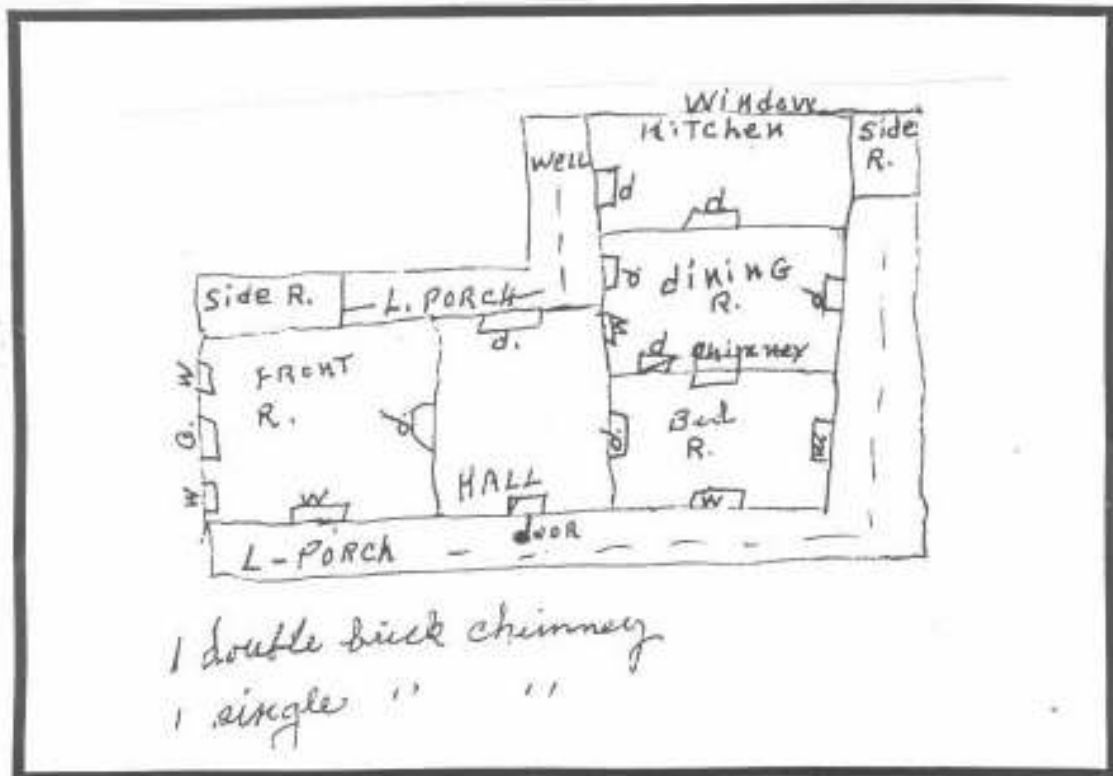


Figure 103. Gertrude Brown Collier's sketch of the Will Brown house (GA06-22).



Figure 104. W.P. Brown, Frank Kytte, Hershel Kytte (mail carrier), Spear Brown, Clara Bell Brown, Mary Etta Brown, Gwendolyn Brown, and Willie Brown on the front porch at the will Brown place. Note the brick piers, wooden steps, and the champered posts.

MEMORIES OF MOUNTAIN GROVE AND MIDDLE BROAD RIVER

This section includes descriptions of some of the homes, schools, churches, and other sites recorded in the Middle Broad River survey area, and the ways people made their living there. These are by no means all of the families or the sites in the area (there were over 250), but they are offered to give the reader a broader sense of the range of people and activities here.

Federal law prohibits the publication of site locations that are to be protected on federal property, so there are no maps showing specific directions to places here. We want to share as much of the rich historical and cultural information we gathered as we can, without exposing the sites to possible vandalism.

Benjamin Fricks Home Place

The Benjamin Fricks home place was located on a level ridge south of a west-flowing tributary of the Middle Fork of the Broad River. Mr. Fricks assisted in recording it, along with his sons. He described the structures as they once stood above the remaining foundations. The house still has plantings of ornamental grasses, roses, vines, privet, and pecan trees that have survived in place.

At the site, Mr., Ben Fricks drew a sketch of the old home, which was built about 1910 (Fig. 47). The house was in the shape of an “L” with a porch wrapped around two sides. It had one end chimney and a double chimney between the family room and a bedroom. A central hall and two bedrooms faced the front of the house; the kitchen and well were in the back. Another small porch was located in the crook of the “L”. The driveway and main road were bordered by a rock wall with steps leading into the front yard. Mr. Fricks noted the locations of the smokehouse, wood shed, carbide gas tank, cotton house crib/wagon port, tool shed, and two barns. Southeast of the house were the syrup mill and a developed spring.

bucket of milk to the Gunn family. Later, Mr. Gunn refused any more milk after the Farmer cows got into his corn. On the way to this site, Seaborn found the location of a “cow catcher gate” and an old still that he remembered.

The Gunn place is located on a toe slope above and between two small creeks. It is surrounded by hardwoods mixed with a few pines and with ornamental plantings of yucca, dogwoods, crepe myrtles, and walnut trees. The house itself had stone piers and log sills that were hand-hewn from heart pine. The house outline forms an “L” approximately 18 by 33 feet. The front of the house faces west. A blacksmith shop was northwest of the house, and remains of a moonshine still are west of the house towards the creek.

Seaborn Farmer described this house as a one-story log house. He remembers that Milton Gunn covered the house with split oak boards he made himself. Seaborn recalled the death of Milton’s wife Mary in the 1920s. Seaborn’s father, J. M. Farmer, went to Toccoa in a horse and wagon, bought a coffin, and brought it back to this home place. He laid Mrs. Gunn's body in the coffin, took her to Mt. Pleasant, and buried her in the rain. After Mary’s death (1927 or 1928) Milton moved to his daughter's house, and the Gunn home place was never lived in after that.

Thomas Kimbrell house

The Thomas Kimbrell house is on a ridgetop on Red Root Road, near Mountain Grove Cemetery. Informants state this house was built of heart pine by local carpenters, George and Wade Naves. In an interview with Lessie Kimbrell, she remembered the house sitting “high off the ground in front.” She could recall eleven steps up to the front porch, lattice work from the porch to the ground, a porch that went almost all the way around the house, and two chimneys of stone and brick. Inside the house, Lessie recalled a large hall from the front to the back with rooms on each side. It had an upstairs that was seldom used. A large barn was located up-slope from the house, and although no archaeological evidence remains, Lessie recalled the barn with a loft, three stables, and a feeding room. She also remembered a smokehouse in the back yard and a shelter for their car (a later acquisition), between the house and barn.

In an interview, Mr. Kimbrell’s son spoke of the house and outbuildings. His and his sister Lessie’s memories are similar. The house was a four-room, wood-sided house, built on brick piers. It had a central hall and a double brick fireplace. Two main doors lead through the front and out the back of this hall, and there were outside doors in each of the four rooms as well. There was a porch on the front and side, and he remembered a well off of the front porch and a garden in the back yard. Beyond the garden was a barn. He knew that when the house was built by his father, neighbors helped in the labor. Lumber came from local sawmills. Thomas J. Kimbrell, 1864-1948, is buried in the Mountain Grove

Cemetery and donated seven acres of land for this cemetery. Thomas Kimbrell (our informant) was born in 1910 and went to Mountain Grove School.

Romans' Den

This site is a natural cave and rock shelter that is located on Big Leatherwood Creek in a mixed pine/hardwood forest. The rock shelter is wide but shallow, opening to the west. A smaller opening leads into an interior room measuring approximately six feet and each side and six feet high. The interior walls are covered with inscriptions. The rock face on the exterior of the cave and the rock shelter above the cave have also been carved into. The names relate to some of the families in the project area, such as the Frick family.

Seaborn Farmer knew the location of this cave (as did many in the community) and had been to it many times while living in Mountain Grove. He remembered that an old wooden door was once fitted across the entrance to the cave. The story of this cave tells of two young men, half-brothers named William Smith and Samuel Roman, who chose to live here rather than return to their Confederate Army units at the front during the Civil War. Roman was denied the right to vote in a local election because he was Indian. His mother was Cherokee, which was not unusual at that time in that area. Much local folklore is attached to this location, including that the half-brothers had hid here for some time, hunting and collecting, but also sometimes stealing food from surrounding farmsteads. There was even a reported shoot-out at the site when the Sheriff's men came to get them. Our investigations there found no indication of the alleged shoot-out, but there were traces of where the door had been, holes for shelf braces, and many names on the walls. There was even a tiny bat or two living there when we visited.

Hulsey Household

Our research on the Hulsey house turned up interesting information about the lives of the Middle Broad River families at the end of the 19th century. Francis A. Hulsey acquired the land in 1887. In 1890, in a series of petitions by Sarah J. Hulsey, Francis' wife, she requested that an amount of land "not to exceed one thousand dollars", be surveyed for a homestead for Sarah and her family. Along with this petition was an oath sworn by Sarah, listing an Inaccurate description of all the real and personal property owned by applicant's husband and . . . list of creditors". Another petition lists her four children by name and, at the time of government acquisition of this tract, one of those children, Emma Jane Whitley, was in possession of the land. The property list is as follows:

Realty- two hundred and fifteen acres of land more or less, a full description of which is given in the foregoing description:

One white and dun ox value	\$15.00
2 cows, 1 black muley the other red muley with calves of same	20.00
1 sow and 7 pigs black and white	4.00
1 shoat white spotted	.50
1 one-horse wagon	5.00
1 buggy (worn out)	2.50
1 cross cut saw	.50
1 plow stock	.50
1 1/2 bushel	.25
2 hoes	.25
1 mattock	.25
1 rake	.10
1 pair of scales	.50
1 iron vise	1.00
Black smith tools	2.00
One box of carpenter tools	7.00
1 grind stone	.50
7 stand bees	4.00
6 empty bee gums	1.00
10 sheep	7.00
Sub - total	\$71 .85

One lot of household and kitchen furniture consisting of:

one wash pot	.50
200 pounds of fodder	3.00
12 bushels of corn	6.00
one shot gun	7.25
one rifle	4.00
one shovel	.25
one spade	.25
shoe tools .	.25
stove and vessels	3.00
table	.50
clock	2.00
chest	.50
three bed sheets	2.00
sewing machine	15.00
two mattresses	1.00
one feather bed	3.00
ten quilts	4.00
six chairs	1.00
one trunk	.25
buggy springs	.50
spinning wheel	.50

one blanket	.50
three counterpanes	1.00
three sheets	.25
eleven fruit cans	1.00
three books	4.50
table dishes	1.00
Sub-total	\$63.00

TOTAL \$134 .85

This listing of a family's meager possessions gives the modern reader an insight into the material possessions of our ancestors, and the relatively few personal possessions they had. The livestock and sewing machine may well have been the family's pride and joy. They certainly were the most valuable things they owned, besides the land itself. Notice, however, that this spread of items did allow the family to provide for their own needs, through the farm tools and equipment, blacksmith tools (tools to make tools), shoe tools, and household tools and equipment (tools to make or prepare food, clothing, and shelter from the cold). With these, the family could be more self-sufficient than most modern families, most of whom must rely on the grocery store and the hardware store for their needs.

Reynolds Mill

Reynolds Mill, a grist mill, cotton gin, and cotton press, was located on the east bank of the Middle Fork of the Broad River along Cannon Road, surrounded by a hardwood forest. This site is marked by three dry-laid stone columns and the rubble of two fallen columns. An access road leads to the mill and a river crossing. Also visible is the raceway along the river.

The Reynolds Mill was documented as far back as 1889, when it was noted on a plat mapping 76 acres surveyed for Elizabeth A. Farmer (wife of W.C. Farmer). Informants recall that the mill was built by Benjamin Reynolds (1818-1899), who is buried in the Fricks-Reynolds Cemetery. John A. Reynolds helped to survey the Stephens County lines in 1905 and also surveyed the Tallulah Falls Railway from Cornelia to Franklin, North Carolina, and the city of Clayton, Georgia. The location is noted as a grist mill on a 1911 map of Stephens County.

Clewis Farmer, Gertrude Collier, and Seaborn Farmer all described this mill as having a flume that led water to the wheel and then a raceway that took the water back to the stream. A pool was formed by a wooden dam across the river above the mill. There is still an iron bar driven into the river stone where the dam was located. The mill was two stories high, with a cotton gin on top and a press inside, on the south end of the building. This cotton press was 4.6 m down to the

bottom, under the mill. It is described as a crank-type press, and 10-15 bales of cotton were pressed per farm. Platform scales were located just outside the door, where bales were rolled outside to be weighed. The weighing process actually began as the cotton was pulled up in a wagon. The wagon was weighed first full, then empty; then the finished bale was weighed. The entry to the grist mill was down some steps. The corn ground at this mill was packed in 50- to 100-pound bags. Cotton was typically sold in town and corn was used around the small farmsteads for feed and flour.

Informants also remember a store being operated here and a mill keeper's house located just across the road. Henry Farmer operated the mill in 1917-1918. After that, W. V. Watkins operated it and lived in the house across road. The mill reportedly burned in the late 1920s. Several informants told of a killing at the mill, where Alex Holcombe fell into the scales in about 1921. Arzo Newson stated in a 1988 interview that "Henry Acree shot the boy three times in the heart, and thought he was still going to get up."

Burnt Meeting Place and Cemetery

This was a historic meeting house and cemetery located on a round knoll and surrounded by a pine forest. The site was known by Mary Lee Steele, Gertrude Collier, and Margie Bentley, three women who grew up in the Browns Bottom area. Gertrude wrote about the "Old Burnt Meeting House":

"This was more of a location, as everyone knew where it was located. There was once a church building here, and Baptist. Dad never told me anything about how it was when it burned. There is a rock foundation where the church was. It is located on the right of the old road and the cemetery is located on the left some distance from where the church stood. There are no head stones other than rock. Pa told me Indians were buried there and possibly slaves."

Gertrude remembered walking this way to Ayersville school, on a path that went by the old graveyard known as "Burnt Meeting Place". The site is now marked by rows of field stones marking depressions. It was noted by field crew members that the area "is not like other cemeteries" they've encountered in the WMA. A church foundation is clear and could be identified as the first Mount Pleasant Church, which was established in 1850 on a tract of land approximately one and a half miles from the present Mount Pleasant Church. In the church minutes dating 1850, family members listed were Ayers, Bailey, Bentley, Brown, Eades, Edmonds, Gunn, Hulsey, Kytile, Massey, and Walker. Robert Ayers donated the first tract of land for this church, and Mrs. W.R. Eades and Ellison Loden donated additional land in later years (Trogdon 1973:127). On a 1911 Stephens County utility map, a church and cemetery are noted at this location, but no name is associated with them (Fig. 11).

Mountain Grove Church, School and Cemetery

Church and School

The building is currently marked only by a set of concrete steps located across the modern road which separates it from the cemetery. The steps were a later addition, as early photos show the structure with wooden steps. Seaborn Farmer said he went to Mountain Grove Church and School (Fig. 94). His first teacher was Lessie Thomason (Seaborn's aunt), and other teachers were Norma Tench, Thelma Davis, Cleo Ivy, Gladys Farmer (his sister), and the Reverend Ben Rich. The church began to be used as a school house after the old Ballew School burned down about 1908 and continued in that use until the 1930's. There were students in grades one through seven in one room. Seaborn can remember that his brother Glen (born 1902) began school at the old Ballew School, and then went to Mountain Grove after the Ballew School burned. In a 1922 Educational Survey of Stephens County, the Mountain Grove School is described as:

“unimproved. Small playgrounds; no play appliances; supervised play; no toilets. Church; no cloak rooms; heated by stove; unpainted. Benches; small hyloplate blackboard; two maps; no sand tables; no pictures; no globes; no library; no reference dictionary; no water cooler. One teacher; six grades; 40 pupils; no posted program; no industrial work; seven months school year (Duggan and Bolton 1922:25).”

Ruth Brown Smith reports that a new building was erected in the late 20's or early 30's which was a white church with the concrete steps reported above. A curtain in the room was used to make two rooms. She remembers the teachers Rev. Rich and Gladys Farmer and other teachers after them were Mamie Patterson, Rudolph Purcell, and Foster Goolsby.



1930 – Rev. Rich and students at Mtn. Grove Church & School

Cemetery

The cemetery associated with this church covers an area of approximately 50 by 35 yards and has at least 49 graves. There are 29 graves with inscribed headstones and 20 graves marked by field stones. Fig. 97 presents the cemetery record from Mountain Grove by the Georgia State Board of Health Bureau of Vital Statistics. Most of the grave sites are in relatively good condition, although some vandalism has occurred. Grave stones are often elaborate and accompanied by artificial flowers. This cemetery is located on a private property within the national Forest and is maintained by descendants. Mary Moss Carpenter designed her own grave located in this cemetery. Pearlie Umberhant's marker states "born 1800 died 1920". Obviously an error and there is a baby's grave next to her marker dated 1920. The local joke is that any 120 year old woman having a baby would die during childbirth! Another grave is of a woman who reportedly always wore a shawl - and the headstone has a shawl carved across a corner.

Ayersville School

The Ayersville School was on a knoll along the west side of the Guard Camp Road. It is now covered by a pine forest. A few corner and foundation stones remain, and there is a well depression with a cement block and hand pump located east of the school. Gertrude Brown Collier and her sisters, Willie Mae Brown Powers and Margie Brown Bentley, grew up in Browns Bottom and can recall walking the road to this "old school house" everyday. She remembers walking it by herself when she was only seven years old. She also had a path that went along the top of the ridge and by an old grave yard. This was known as the "Burnt Meeting Place". Mrs. Collier wrote from memory about school in the Ayersville community:

"We started to school after the fall harvest until the spring planting. It was a joy to get away from work and play and be with other children. We would dress in underwear (union suits), with legs and long sleeves, long stockings, high top shoes, and a sweater and long coats. The weather was always cold in winter with lots of snow, rain, and sleet. We walked about three miles to school. We had a big pot-bellied stove which we had to fire up when we got to school. The wood was green and wet. The boys hunted pine knots in the woods to get the fire started. It never got warm until we got ready to go home. We carried our lunch of biscuits with sausage, ham, jelly, or honey to school in a tin bucket. Sometimes we would wrap it up in a sheet from the Atlanta Constitution (which we got in the mail every day). The first grade through the seventh grade was taught in one large room. I was small but learned a lot by listening to what the higher grades were being taught. A big bell set on top of the building and it would ring when recess was up. We got water from a spring that had a bucket and dipper. We all drank from that. Later a well and a pump was put in. We pumped the water by hand. Our bathroom was the woods, the girls went in one direction, the boys in another direction. (We never met in the middle).

Gertrude attended grades 1-7, then repeated seventh grade two or three times. Then the family moved into Toccoa, in order for the two youngest girls to finish high school. One graduated in 1933. Mary Lee Steele went to Ayersville School for about two years. Mary remembered Gertrude Collier taught school at Ayersville while she was there. Paul Crump was a teacher there also.

In a 1922 Educational Survey of Stephens County, the Ayersville school is described as:

"Area two acres, unimproved; no play appliances; supervised play; no gardens; no toilet. Value \$800.00; one room; properly lighted; well kept; no cloak rooms; heated by stove; good ventilation; unpainted inside. Double patent desks; no teacher's desks; 20 in. hyloplate blackboard; no charts; no globes; no pictures; no reference dictionary; a covered water cooler. One

teacher; 5 grades; 42 pupils; no programs posted; no clubs; seven months school year (Duggan and Bolton 1922:27)."

Cannon School and Voting House

The historic Cannon School and voting house was located on private land, just off of the National Forest, but it is included for general information here. It was on a slight slope south of an east-flowing tributary of Big Leatherwood Creek. It had two chimneys and a well house, with a small voting house nearby.

Informants Howard Farmer, Burch Farmer, Theo Andrews, and Ethel Farmer recalled that the school was one of three successive buildings which were built after the Old Ballew School burned, and that the first two Cannon School buildings also burned. They stated it was a one-room school with an upstairs. It had six grades and enough pupils for two teachers. They recalled walking to school. They also remembered Hershel Cobb (Ty Cobb's father) was the first school teacher at Cannon School. In a 1922 publication, entitled "Educational Survey of Stephens County", Cannon school was described:

"Area, one acre; titles to trustees with reverting clause; clean and fairly well kept; no gardens; no toilets; no play equipment. Value \$1,000.00; one room; improperly lighted; no cloak rooms; heated by fireplaces; unpainted. Benches; no teacher's desks; no sand tables; one small blackboard; one Georgia map; no charts; no globes; no pictures; no dictionary; no library. Two teachers; 6 grades; 21 pupils; no programs posted; no clubs; seven months school year (Duggan and Bolton 1922:24)."



CANNON SCHOOL

Teachers: Misses Fannie Garland, Mamie Payne.

Location: Currahee 2½ miles; Mountain Grove 2 miles N. W.

Grounds: Area, one acre; titles to trustees with reverting clause; clean and fairly well kept; no gardens; no toilets; no play-equipment.

Building: Value \$1,000.00; one room; improperly lighted; no cloak rooms; heated by fireplaces; unpainted.

Equipment: Benches; no teachers' desks; no sand tables; one small blackboard; one Georgia map; no charts; no globes; no pictures; no dictionary; no library.

Organization: Two teachers; 6 grades; 21 pupils; no programs posted; no clubs; seven months school year.

Maintenance: \$585.25 per annum.

Logan Perkins Ornamental Plantings

The Logan Perkins home was surrounded by forest and ornamental plantings of redbud, yucca, daffodils, and vinca minor, set on a ridge west of Lake Russell. A row of cut cedar trees runs along the eastern limit of the site, bordering an old road trace.

George Sellars Home

The George Sellars house was northwest of the Toccoa Pumping Station and west along the Guard Camp Road. A branch of the Middle Fork of the Broad River is southwest of the place, and there are ornamental plantings of crepe myrtle trees and an unusual Balm of Gilead tree, which was frequently used for medicinal purposes.

Today the site is covered in briars, daffodils, and buttercups and sits on a terrace above the branch. Beulah Brown Sellars lived in this house with her husband, George. In an interview in 1987, Mrs. Sellars spoke of her home place which was known as "The Old Tabor Place". She moved in after her marriage in 1918. She remembered three rooms and a kitchen, two rock fireplaces, and a large porch. She could also remember the well which was located under a wood shelter in the back yard. She spoke of a big barn and a smoke house, and talked of raising corn, cotton, and vegetables. She could also remember their renters (the Rays) living in a house northwest of this one. Mrs. Sellars went to Ayersville School and Mt. Pleasant Church while living in the area. At the time of government acquisition, this property was a part of Camp Toccoa.

One of the most beautiful waterfall in the WMA is near this homesite - "Tabor Falls".

SUMMARY

This has not been your usual county history or family genealogy.. We have made no attempt to write about all the families, and all the genealogies. What we have tried to do is to present a picture, or better yet, a series of snapshots. We wanted to show people, rural community life, and their environment in the Middle Broad River Valley when they last lived here. In the 1930's, the land was bought up by the government, and the people moved away. No one seems to have recorded what was happening then to the people, and what life was like for them. We have tried to make up for that, two generations later. This then, is a short history of the area, and a series of vignettes from the oral histories we recorded, in 1991-1993 from those who lived here.

The 1930's New Deal in Washington had far-reaching effects on the whole country, without doubt. The historians tell us that it did not seem to effect northeast Georgia much, but here is one of those effects. Land which was not very productive (according to some) was taken out of crop production . With local help, it was re-seeded, stocked, and terraced to raise pine and hardwood forests, to stabilize soil, and slow the erosion, to clean up the water, and to provide wildlife and fish habitat. In the intervening years, the trees have grown to maturity, and some have been harvested. Others died from the ravages of the Southern Pine Beetle. Some of them could be harvested, too. These activities opened up the land again in the 1990's in ways and places that haven't been open in half a century. Much of the pine lands are now converting slowly to hardwoods.

This is a popular hunting, fishing, camping and picnicking area now: the Lake Russell Wildlife Management Area and the Lake Russell and Nancytown Recreation Areas. Habitats are provided for the deer, turkey, and many other creatures. Fish are stocked in the streams. Trails are maintained, as are the campgrounds and swimming beach. These are used by people from the local area, and from the big urban areas outside. Recently horseback riding groups have begun to explore where only automobile drivers and hikers have gone for years. Thus we have new generations who appreciate the beauty of this rural area. It is valuable to them, and they build new memories for themselves here. After all, it built memories for those who lived and loved and moved away from here 60 years ago, as it does for us today..

A government effort to help the people towards a better way of life worked well for some, and less well for others. That is often the way of government programs. Those who stayed around the area were hired to work on the new Refuge, and thus supported their families. Some made new lives in nearby communities, They return often to re-live their memories and enjoy the peace and serenity here. They care for the cemeteries where their parents and other relatives lie. Others moved away, some never to return. There are those who are still saddened to see how

their land has changed. Some are just glad it was not all developed, and remains open and a little “wild,” for everyone’s enjoyment. Our partners are glad to get the recording done for future generations, and we are glad to have been a part of that recording.

POST SCRIPT:

CORA LEDBETTER, HISTORIAN

Much of the family historical and genealogical information in this document comes from the notes and publications of Cora Ledbetter, to whom we are greatly indebted.

Cora Iola Brady Ledbetter, daughter of James Franklin Brady and Emma Cordelia Simmons Brady, was born February 18, 1902, in a one-room log cabin on a beautiful knoll at the foot of the Rushy Branch in the Leatherwood Community in Habersham, now Stephens County. She attended Canon's Academy, Tallulah Falls School, and Eastanollee High School. Upon graduation, she went to State Normal School in Athens on a scholarship and, in 1924, earned a diploma in Industrial Arts. She immediately began teaching at Tallulah Falls Industrial School and served there as a housemother, teacher of grades 1, 6, and 7, and director of plays which she and her students wrote. Cora taught school for 27 years in Habersham County, Clarkesville and Tallulan Falls.

Cora had many interests. She collected over three dozen varieties of wildflowers in her garden; she made jelly from sassafras and wood sorrell; she held a certificate in practical home nursing; she did a lot of needlework and excelled at creating quilts; she also painted, and kept a doll collection.

Her abiding love for genealogy and history led her to write and publish in 1971 "Genealogy of the family of John F. Clodfeller", a family history of her husband, Henry Baxter Ledbetter, to whom she had been married for 48 years when he died in 1975. She traveled to several states to obtain marriage certificates, coats of arms, and war records for this project. She wrote some 40 historical articles for the Toccoa Record during 1975-1976 on a variety of subjects: family life in the 1800s, Currahee Mountain, Cherokee Indians in whom she had an avid interest, having learned that her great-grandmother, Alice Maddock, was a Cherokee Indian. Her research took her to libraries, courthouses, state and national archives; she checked old deeds and wills, interviewed local residents, photographed donkeys, old barns, and cemetery markers. Being a fine mapmaker, she recorded locations of gravesites for her section on cemeteries in "Stephens County History" by Katherine Trogon.

Cora Ledbetter lived at Tallulah Falls for 48 years and in Toccoa for 23 years. She lived in a nursing home in Gainesville until her death in 1997. She had two daughters, Ruth Simmons of Clermont, Georgia, and Betty Jean Long of Midland City, Alabama. She had four grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren -

Thank you, Cora, for all your efforts to preserve the culture of your home communities!



Figure 148. The Brady Family of site GA06-431, ca. 1916.

This photo is of Cora's family taking her to the Tallulah Falls School - a very special event in the family life.

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LIFE ALONG THE MIDDLE BROAD RIVER

Northeast Georgia today is a mixture of growing cities and light agriculture, but it was not always this way. This book focuses on the evolution of the area from prehistoric times to the early 1900's. While it focuses at the end on those living in what is now the Lake Russell Wildlife Management Area, this was done as it provided an excellent opportunity to study that area as part of a US Government project to document the history of lands it possesses.

The result is an excellent narrative that builds in the mind of the reader the history of the area and the lives that were typical of all who lived in Northeast Georgia in the early 1900's. So, if you have ancestors from this area, read this book and mentally change the names to those of your family. If doing so helps you realize the history of the land and how all of our ancestors lived, the hardships, the character, and the ingenuity of their lives, the goal of the book has been accomplished.

HAPPENINGS

A collection of the short stories written by Cora Brady Ledbetter – the undisputed historian of the Leatherwood Community. Cora was a living source of history since many of the experiences came from her own real life experiences. These stories were previously printed in issues of the various newspapers and historical society newsletters. Provided by her descendents, they are a priceless example of living, and the humor, of those who lived in this area.